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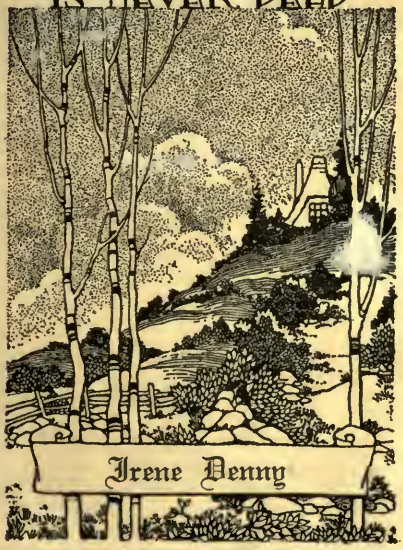

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VOLUME XX

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VOLTAIRE

HISTORY OF CHARLES XII.

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I

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HISTORY

OF

CHARLES THE TWELFTH.

A Discourse on the History of Charles XII. (*Prefixed to the First Edition.*)

Few are the princes whose lives merit a particular history. In vain have most of them been the objects of slander, or of flattery. Small is the number of those whose memory is preserved; and that number would be still more inconsiderable were none but the good remembered.

The princes who have the best claim to immortality are such as have benefited mankind. Thus, while France endures, the affection of Louis XII. for his people will ever be held in grateful remembrance. The great failings of Francis I. will be excused, for the sake of the arts and sciences of which he was the father. Blessed will be the memory of Henry IV., who conquered his kingdom as much by his clemency as by his valor. And the munificence of Louis XIV. in protecting the arts which owed their birth to Francis I. will be ever extolled.

It is for a very different reason, that the memory of bad princes is preserved; like fires, plagues, and

inundations, they are remembered only for the mischief they have done.

Conquerors hold a middle rank between good kings and tyrants, but are most akin to the latter. As they have a glaring reputation, we are desirous of knowing the most minute circumstances of their lives; for such is the weakness of mankind, that they admire those who have rendered themselves remarkable for wickedness, and talk with greater pleasure of the destroyer than of the founder of an empire.

As for those princes who have neither distinguished themselves in peace nor in war; who have neither been remarkable for great virtues nor great vices; their lives furnish so little matter, either for imitation or instruction, that they are not worthy of being committed to writing. Of so many emperors of Rome, Greece, Germany, and Muscovy; of so many sultans, caliphs, popes, and kings; how few are there, whose names deserve to be recorded anywhere but in chronological tables, where they only serve to mark the different epochs.

There is commonplace among princes, as well as among the rest of mankind; yet such is the itch of writing, that no sooner is a prince dead, than the world is filled with volumes under the title of memoirs and histories of his life, and anecdotes of his court. By these means books have been multiplied in such a manner, that were a man to live a hundred years, and to employ them all in reading, he would not have time to run over what has been published relating to the history of Europe alone, for the two last centuries.

This eager and unreasonable desire of transmitting useless stories to posterity, and of fixing the attention of future ages upon common events, proceeds from a weakness extremely incident to those who have lived in courts, and have unhappily been engaged in the management of public affairs. They consider the court in which they have lived as the most magnificent in the world; their king as the greatest monarch: and the affairs in which they have been concerned as the most important that ever were transacted: and they vainly imagine, that posterity will view them in the same light.

If a prince undertakes a war, or his court is embroiled in cabals and intrigues; if he buys the friendship of one of his neighbors, or sells his own to another; if, after some victories and defeats, he at last makes peace with his enemies; his subjects are so warm and interested by the part which they themselves have acted in these scenes, that they regard their own age as the most glorious that has existed since the creation. But what is the consequence? Why, this prince dies; new measures are adopted; the intrigues of his court, his mistresses, his ministers, his generals, his wars, and even himself, are forgotten.

Ever since the time that Christian princes have been endeavoring to cheat one another, and have alternately been making war and peace, they have signed an immense number of treaties, and fought as many battles; they have performed many glorious, and many infamous actions. Nevertheless, should all this heap of transactions be transmitted to posterity, they would most of them destroy and

annihilate each other; and the memory of those only would remain which have produced great revolutions, or which, being related by able writers, are preserved from oblivion, like the pictures of obscure persons, drawn by a masterly hand.

Sensible then, as we are, of the truth of these observations, we should not have added a particular history of Charles XII. King of Sweden, to the infinite number of books with which the world is already crowded, were it not that he and his rival, Peter Alexiowitz, by far the greater man of the two, are universally admitted to be the most illustrious persons that have appeared for upwards of twenty centuries. The trifling pleasure, however, of relating extraordinary events was not our only motive for engaging in this work; we flattered ourselves that it might be of some little use to princes, should it ever happen to fall into their hands. No king, surely, can be so incorrigible as, when he reads the "History of Charles XII.", not to be cured of the vain ambition of making conquests. Where is the prince that can say, I have more courage, more virtues, more resolution, greater strength of body, greater skill in war, or better troops, than Charles XII.? And yet, if, with all these advantages, and after so many victories, Charles was so unfortunate, what fate may other princes expect, who, with less capacity and fewer resources, shall entertain the same ambitious views?

This history is composed from the relations of some persons of distinction, who lived several years with Charles XII. and with Peter the Great,

Emperor of Muscovy; and who having retired, long after the death of these princes, into a country of liberty, can have no interest in concealing the truth. M. Fabricius, who lived in the most intimate familiarity with Charles XII.; M. de Fierville, the French ambassador; M. de Villelongue, a colonel in the Swedish service, and even M. Poniatowski, have all of them contributed their share in furnishing me with materials.

In this work we have not ventured to advance a single fact, without consulting eye-witnesses of undoubted veracity; a circumstance that renders this history very different from those gazettes which have already been published under the title of lives of Charles XII. If we have omitted some little skirmishes between the Swedish and Muscovite officers, the reason is, that we mean to write the history, not of these officers, but only of the King of Sweden, and even of his life none but the most important events. The history of a prince, in our opinion, is not to relate everything he did, but only what he did worthy of being transmitted to posterity.

Here, it may not be improper to remark, that many things, which were true at the time of writing this history in 1728, are not so at present. Commerce, for instance, begins to be more encouraged in Sweden. The Polish infantry are better disciplined, and are provided with regimental clothes, a convenience which they then wanted. In reading history, one ought always to remember the time in which the author wrote. To peruse the memoirs of Cardinal de Retz, one would take the French for

a set of enthusiasts, breathing nothing but faction, madness, and civil discord. To read the history of the happy years of Louis XIV. one would think they were born to obey, to conquer, and to cultivate the polite arts. And, should any one consult the memoirs of the first years of Louis XV. he will find them devoted to luxury and avarice, and too regardless of everything else. The Spaniards at present are not the Spaniards of Charles V. and yet they may be so in a few years. The English of this age bear no more resemblance to the fanatics in Cromwell's time, than the monks and monsignori, that crowd the streets of Rome, do to the ancient Scipios. I doubt much whether the Swedish troops could be rendered, all of a sudden, so hardy and warlike as were those of Charles XII. We say of a man, that he was brave at such a time; in like manner we should say in speaking of a nation, they were of this or that character in such a year, and under such a government.

Should any prince or minister meet with disagreeable truths in this book, let them remember that, as they act in a public station, they ought to give the public an account of their conduct. Such is the price they must pay for their greatness. The business of a historian is to record, not to flatter; and the only way to oblige mankind to speak well of us, is to contribute all that lies in our power to their happiness and welfare.

CHAPTER I.

An abridgment of the history of Sweden, to the reign of Charles XII. The education of that prince, and an account of his enemies. Character of the Czar Peter Alexiowitz. Curious anecdotes relative to that prince and the Russian nation. Muscovy, Poland, and Denmark, unite against Charles XII.

SWEDEN and Finland make up a kingdom two hundred leagues broad, and three hundred long. This country reaches from the fifty-fifth degree of latitude, or thereabouts, to the seventieth. It lies in a very severe climate, which is hardly ever softened either by the return of spring or of autumn. The winter prevails there nine months in the year. The scorching heat of the summer succeeds immediately to the excessive cold of the winter. The frost begins in the month of October, without any of those imperceptible gradations, which in other countries usher in the seasons, and render the alteration more agreeable. Nature, in return, has given to this cold climate a clear sky and a pure air. The almost constant heat of the summer produces flowers and fruits in a very short time. The long nights of the winter are tempered by the evening and morning twilights, which last for a greater or a less time, in proportion as the sun is nearer to, or farther removed from Sweden; and the light of the moon, unobscured by clouds, and increased by the reflection of the snow that covers the ground, and frequently by the aurora borealis, makes it as con-

venient to travel in Sweden by night as by day. For want of pasture, the cattle there are smaller than in the more southern parts of Europe; but the men are of a large stature, healthy from the purity of the air, and strong from the severity of the climate; they live to a great age, unless enfeebled by the immoderate use of wines and strong liquors, of which the northern nations seem to be the more fond, the less nature has indulged them with these commodities.

The Swedes are well made, strong, and active, and capable of enduring the greatest fatigue, want, and hunger. Born with a military genius, and high spirit, they are more brave than industrious, having long neglected, and even at present but little cultivating the arts of commerce, which alone can supply them with those productions in which their country is deficient. It was chiefly from Sweden*, they say—one part of which is still called Gothland—that those swarms of Goths issued forth, who like a deluge overran Europe, and wrested it from the Romans, who had usurped the dominion of that vast country, which they continued for the space of five hundred years to harass by their tyranny, and to civilize by their laws.

The northern countries were much more popu-

* If our author had reflected with his usual precision, he would have perceived that a cold, barren country, of the extent of Sweden, could not possibly furnish a one-hundredth part of those multitudes that deluged all Europe; and a little inquiry would have given him to understand, that the Goths themselves came from Scythia or Tartary, which was called the *Officina Gentium.* It is now (1770) generally allowed that the Celtæ, the Goths, the Heruli, Vandals, and Huns, were all originally Tartars.

lous at that time than they are at present. Religion, by allowing the men a plurality of wives, gave them an opportunity of furnishing the state with more subjects. The women themselves knew no reproach but that of sterility or idleness; and being as strong and as laborious as the men, they bore children faster and for a longer time. Sweden, however, with that part of Finland which it still retains, does not contain above four millions of inhabitants. The soil is poor and barren; Schonen is the only province that bears wheat. The current coin of the kingdom does not exceed nine millions of livres. The public bank, which is the oldest in Europe, was at first established from mere necessity; the copper and iron, in which their payments were formerly made, being too heavy to be transported.

Sweden preserved its freedom without interruption to the middle of the fourteenth century. During that long period, the form of government was more than once altered; but all these alterations were in favor of liberty. The first magistrate was invested with the name of king, a title which, in different countries, is attended with very different degrees of power. In France and Spain it signifies an absolute monarch; in Poland, Sweden, and England, it means the first man of the republic. This king could do nothing without the senate; and the senate depended upon the States-General, which were frequently assembled. The representatives of the nation, in these grand assemblies, were the gentry, the bishops, and the deputies of the towns; and in process of time, the very peasants, a class of people unjustly despised in other places, and sub-

ject to slavery in almost all the northern countries, were admitted to a share in the administration.

About the year 1492, this nation, so jealous of its liberty, and which still piques itself on having conquered Rome about thirteen hundred years ago, was subjected to the yoke by a woman, and by a people less powerful than the Swedes.

Margaret of Waldemar, the Semiramis of the North, and Queen of Denmark and Norway, subdued Sweden by force and stratagem, and united these three extensive kingdoms into one mighty monarchy. After her death, Sweden was rent by civil wars; it alternately threw off and submitted to the Danish yoke; was sometimes governed by kings, and sometimes by administrators. About the year 1520, this unhappy kingdom was horribly harassed by two tyrants: the one was Christian II., King of Denmark, a monster whose character was entirely composed of vices, without the least ingredient of virtue: the other an archbishop of Upsala, and primate of the kingdom, as barbarous as the former. These two, by mutual agreement, caused the consuls and the magistrates of Stockholm, together with ninety-four senators, to be seized in one day, and to be executed by the hand of the common hangman, under the frivolous pretence that they were excommunicated by the pope, for having dared to defend the rights of the state against the encroachments of the archbishop.

While these two men, unanimous in their oppressive measures, and disagreeing only about the division of the spoil, domineered over Sweden with all the tyranny of the most absolute despotism, and

all the cruelty of the most implacable revenge, a new and unexpected event gave a sudden turn to the state of affairs in the North.

Gustavus Vasa, a young man, sprung from the ancient kings of Sweden, arose from the forests of Dalecarlia, where he had long lain concealed, and came to deliver his country from bondage. He was one of those great souls whom nature so seldom produces, and who are born with all the qualifications necessary to form the accomplished monarch. His handsome and stately person, and his noble and majestic air, gained him followers at first sight. His eloquence, recommended by an engaging manner, was the more persuasive, the less it was artful. His enterprising genius formed those projects which, though to the vulgar they may appear rash, are considered only as bold in the eyes of great men, and which his courage and perseverance enabled him to accomplish. Brave with circumspection, and mild and gentle in a fierce and cruel age, he was as virtuous as it is possible for the leader of a party to be.

Gustavus Vasa had been the hostage of Christian, and had been detained a prisoner contrary to the law of nations. Having found means to escape from prison, he had dressed himself in the habit of a peasant, and in that disguise had wandered about in the mountains and woods of Dalecarlia, where he was reduced to the necessity of working in the copper mines, at once to procure a livelihood, and to conceal himself from his enemies. Buried, as he was, in these subterraneous caverns, he had the boldness to form the design of dethroning the

tyrant. With this view he discovered himself to the peasants, who regarded him as one of those superior beings to whom the common herd of mankind are naturally inclined to submit. These savage boors he soon improved into hardy and warlike soldiers. He attacked Christian and the archbishop, beat them in several encounters, banished them both from Sweden, and, at last, was justly chosen by the states king of that country, of which he had been the deliverer.

Hardly was he established on the throne, when he undertook an enterprise still more difficult than his conquests. The real tyrants of the state were the bishops, who having engrossed into their own hands almost all the riches of Sweden, employed their ill-gotten wealth in oppressing the subjects, and in making war upon the king. This power was the more formidable, as, in the opinion of the ignorant populace, it was held to be sacred. Gustavus punished the Catholic religion for the crimes of its ministers; and, in less than two years, introduced Lutheranism into Sweden, rather by the arts of policy, than by the influence of authority. Having thus conquered the kingdom, as he was wont to say, from the Danes and the clergy, he reigned a happy and an absolute monarch to the age of seventy, and then died full of glory, leaving his family and religion in quiet possession of the throne.

One of his descendants was that Gustavus Adolphus, who is commonly called the great Gustavus. He conquered Ingria, Livonia, Bremen, Verden, Wismar, and Pomerania, not to mention above a hundred places in Germany, which, after his death,

were yielded up by the Swedes. He shook the throne of Ferdinand II. and protected the Lutherans in Germany, an attempt in which he was secretly assisted by the pope himself, who dreaded the power of the emperor much more than the prevalence of heresy. He it was who by his victories effectually contributed to humble the house of Austria; though the glory of that enterprise is usually ascribed to Cardinal de Richelieu, who well knew how to procure himself the reputation of those great actions, which Gustavus was contented with simply performing. He was just upon the point of extending the war beyond the Danube, and perhaps of dethroning the emperor, when he was killed, in the thirty-seventh year of his age, at the battle of Lützen, which he gained over Wallenstein, carrying along with him to his grave the name of Great, the lamentations of the North, and the esteem of his enemies.

His daughter Christina, a lady of extraordinary genius, was much fonder of conversing with men of learning, than of reigning over a people whose knowledge was entirely confined to the art of war. She became as famous for quitting the throne as her ancestors had been for obtaining or securing it. The Protestants have loaded her memory with many injurious aspersions, as if it were impossible for a person to be possessed of great virtues without adhering to Luther; and the papists have piqued themselves too much on the conversion of a woman who had nothing to recommend her but her taste for philosophy. She retired to Rome, where she passed the rest of her days in the midst of those arts

of which she was so passionately fond, and for the sake of which she had renounced a crown at twenty-seven years of age.

Before her abdication, she prevailed upon the states of Sweden to elect her cousin, Charles Gustavus X., son to the Count Palatine, and Duke of Deux-Ponts, as her successor. This prince added new conquests to those of Gustavus Adolphus. He presently carried his arms into Poland, where he gained the famous battle of Warsaw, which lasted for three days. He waged a long and a successful war with the Danes; besieged them in their capital; re-united Schonen to Sweden; and confirmed the Duke of Holstein in the possession of Schleswig, at least for a time. At last, having met with a reverse of fortune, and concluded a peace with his enemies, he turned his ambition against his subjects, and formed the design of establishing a despotic government in Sweden. But, like the great Gustavus, he died in the thirty-seventh year of his age, without being able to finish his project, the full accomplishment of which was reserved for his son, Charles XI.

Charles XI. was a warrior, like all his ancestors, and more despotic than any of them. He abolished the authority of the senate, which was declared to be the senate of the king, and not of the kingdom. He was prudent, vigilant, indefatigable; qualities that must certainly have secured him the love of his subjects, had not his despotic measures been more apt to excite their fear than to gain their affections.

In 1680 he married Ulrica Eleonora, daughter to

Frederick III., King of Denmark, a princess eminent for her virtue, and worthy of greater confidence than her husband was pleased to repose in her. Of this marriage, on the 27th of June, 1682, was born King Charles XII., the most extraordinary man, perhaps, that ever appeared in the world. In him were united all the great qualities of his ancestors; nor had he any other fault or failing, but that he possessed all these virtues in too high a degree. This is the prince whose history we now purpose to write, and concerning whose person and actions we shall relate nothing but what is vouched by the best authority.

The first book which was put into his hands was Puffendorf's introduction to the "History of Europe," that from thence he might acquire an early knowledge of his own dominions, and of those of his neighbors. He next learned the German language, which he continued to speak for the future, with the same fluency as his mother tongue. At seven years of age he could manage a horse; and the violent exercises in which he delighted, and which discovered his martial disposition, soon procured him a vigorous constitution, capable of supporting the incredible fatigues which his natural inclination always prompted him to undergo.

Though gentle in his infancy, he betrayed an inflexible obstinacy. The only way to influence him was to awaken his sense of honor; by mentioning the word glory, you might have obtained anything from him. He had a great aversion to the Latin tongue; but as soon as he heard that the Kings of Poland and Denmark understood it, he learned it

with great expedition, and retained so much of it, as to be able to speak it all the rest of his life. The same means were employed to engage him to learn the French; but he could never be persuaded to make use of that tongue, not even with the French ambassadors themselves, who understood no other.

As soon as he had acquired a tolerable knowledge of the Latin, his teacher made him translate "Quintus Curtius;" a book for which he conceived a great liking, rather on account of the subject than the style. The person who explained this author to him having asked him what he thought of Alexander: "I think," said the prince, "I could wish to be like him." "But," resumed the preceptor, "he only lived two and thirty years." "Ah!" replied he, "and is not that enough, when one has conquered kingdoms?" The courtiers did not fail to carry these answers to the king, his father, who would often cry out: "This child will excel me, and will even go beyond the great Gustavus." One day he happened to be diverting himself in the royal apartment, in viewing two plans; the one of a town in Hungary, which the Turks had taken from the emperor; the other of Riga the capital of Livonia, a province conquered by the Swedes about a century before. Under the plan of the town in Hungary were written these words, taken from the book of Job: "The Lord hath given it to me, and the Lord hath taken it from me; blessed be the name of the Lord." The young prince having read this inscription, immediately took a pencil, and wrote under the plan of Riga: "The Lord hath given it to me, and the devil shall

not take it from me*." Thus, in the most indifferent actions of his childhood, his unconquerable spirit would frequently discover some traces of those heroic qualities which characterize great souls, and which plainly indicated what sort of a man he would one day prove.

He was but eleven years of age when he lost his mother, who expired on the fifth of August, 1693. The disease of which she died was supposed to be owing to the bad usage she had received from her husband, and to her own endeavors to conceal her vexation. Charles XI. had, by means of a certain court of justice, which was called the Chamber of Liquidations, and erected by his sole authority, deprived a great number of his subjects of their wealth. Crowds of citizens ruined by this chamber, nobility, merchants, farmers, widows, and orphans, filled the streets of Stockholm, and daily repaired to the gate of the palace to pour forth their unavailing complaints. The queen succored these unhappy people as much as lay in her power; she gave them her money, her jewels, her furniture, and even her clothes; and when she had no more to give them, with tears in her eyes she threw herself at her husband's feet, beseeching him to have pity on his wretched subjects. The king gravely answered her, "Madam, we took you to bear us children, not to give us advice." And from that time he treated her with a severity that is said to have shortened her days.

He died four years after her, on the fifteenth

* This anecdote I give from the information of two French ambassadors, who resided at the court of Sweden.

of April, 1697, in the forty-second year of his age, and the thirty-seventh of his reign, at a time when the empire, Spain, and Holland, on the one side, and France on the other, had referred the decision of their quarrels to his arbitration, and when he had already concerted the terms of accommodation between these different powers.

He left to his son, who was then fifteen years of age, a throne well established and respected abroad; subjects poor, but valiant and loyal; together with a treasury in good order, and managed by able ministers.

Charles XII. at his accession to the throne, found himself the absolute and undisturbed master, not only of Sweden and Finland, but also of Livonia, Carelia, Ingria, Wismar, Viborg, the islands of Rügen and Oesel, and the finest part of Pomerania, together with the duchies of Bremen and Verden, all of them the conquests of his ancestors, secured to the crown by long possession, and by the solemn treaties of Münster and Olivia, and supported by the terror of the Swedish arms. The peace of Ryswick, which was begun under the auspices of the father, being fully concluded under those of the son, he found himself, from the first moment of his reign, the mediator of Europe.

The laws of Sweden fix the majority of their kings at the age of fifteen; but Charles XI., who was entirely absolute, put off, by his last will, the majority of his son to the age of eighteen. In this he favored the ambitious views of his mother, Edwiga-Eleonora of Holstein, dowager of Charles X., who was appointed by the king, her son, guardian to

the young king, her grandson, and regent of the kingdom, in conjunction with a council of five persons.

The regent had had a share in the management of public affairs during the reign of her son. She was now advanced in years; but her ambition, which was greater than her ability, prompted her to entertain the pleasing hopes of possessing authority for a long time, under the king, her grandson. She kept him at as great a distance as possible from all concern with the affairs of state. The young prince passed his time either in hunting or in reviewing his troops, and would even sometimes exercise with them; which amusement seemed only to be the natural effect of his youthful vivacity. He never betrayed any dissatisfaction sufficient to alarm the regent, who flattered herself that the dissipation of mind occasioned by these diversions would render him incapable of application, and leave her in possession of the supreme power for a considerable time.

One day in the month of November, and in the same year in which his father died, when he had been taking a review of several regiments, and Piper the counsellor was standing by him, he seemed to be absorbed in a profound reverie. "May I take the liberty," said Piper to him, "of asking your majesty what you are thinking of so seriously?" "I am thinking," replied the prince, "that I am capable of commanding those brave fellows; and I don't choose that either they or I should receive orders from a woman." Piper immediately seized this opportunity of making his fortune; but conscious

that his own interest was not sufficient for the execution of such a dangerous enterprise as the removal of the queen from the regency, and the hastening of the king's majority, he proposed the affair to Count Axel Sparre, a man of a daring spirit, and fond of popularity. Him he cajoled with the hopes of being the king's confidant. The count readily swallowed the bait, and undertook the management of the whole matter, while all his labors only tended to promote the interest of Piper. The counsellors of the regency were soon drawn into the scheme, and forthwith proceeded to the execution of it, in order to recommend themselves the more effectually to the king.

They went in a body to propose it to the queen, who little expected such a declaration. The counsellors of the regency laid the matter before the States-General, who were then assembled, and who were all unanimous in approving the proposal. The point was carried with a rapidity that nothing could withstand; so that Charles XII. had only to signify his desire of reigning, and, in three days, the states bestowed the government upon him. The queen's power and credit fell in an instant. She afterwards led a private life, which was more suitable to her age, though less agreeable to her humor. The king was crowned on the twenty-fourth of December following. He made his entry into Stockholm on a sorrel horse shod with silver, having a sceptre in his hand and a crown upon his head, amidst the acclamations of a whole people passionately fond of every novelty, and always conceiving great hopes from the reign of a young prince.

The ceremony of the consecration and coronation belongs to the Archbishop of Upsala. This is almost the only privilege that remains to him of the great number that were claimed by his predecessors. After having anointed the prince, according to custom, he held the crown in his hand, in order to put it upon his head: Charles snatched it from him and crowned himself, regarding the poor prelate all the while with a stern look. The people, who are always dazzled by everything that has an air of grandeur and magnificence, applauded this action of the king. Even those who had groaned most severely under the tyranny of the father, were foolish enough to commend the son for this instance of arrogance, which was a sure pledge of their future slavery.

As soon as Charles was master of the kingdom, he made Piper his chief confidant, intrusting him at the same time with the management of public affairs, and giving him all the power of a prime minister, without the odium of the name. A few days after he created him a count, which is a dignity of great eminence in Sweden, and not an empty title that may be assumed without any manner of importance, as with us in France.

The beginning of the king's reign gave no very favorable idea of his character. It was imagined that he had been more ambitious of obtaining the supreme power, than worthy of possessing it. True it is, he had no dangerous passion; but his conduct discovered nothing but the sallies of youth, and the freaks of obstinacy. He seemed to be equally proud and lazy. The ambassadors who resided at

his court, took him even for a person of mean capacity, and represented him as such to their respective masters.* The Swedes entertained the same opinion of him: nobody knew his real character: he did not even know it himself, until the storm that suddenly arose in the North gave him an opportunity of displaying his great talents, which had hitherto lain concealed.

Three powerful princes, taking the advantage of his youth, conspired his ruin almost at the same time. The first was his own cousin, Frederick IV., King of Denmark: the second Augustus, Elector of Saxony and King of Poland: Peter the Great, Czar of Muscovy, was the third, and the most dangerous. It will be necessary to unfold the origin of these wars, which produced such great events: and to begin with Denmark.

Of the two sisters of Charles XII. the eldest was married to the Duke of Holstein, a young prince of an undaunted spirit and of a gentle disposition. The duke, oppressed by the King of Denmark, repaired to Stockholm with his spouse, and throwing himself into the arms of the king, earnestly implored his assistance. This he hoped to obtain, as Charles was not only his brother-in-law, but was likewise the sovereign of a people who bore an irreconcilable hatred to the Danes.

The ancient house of Holstein, sunk into that of Oldenburg, had been advanced by election to the throne of Denmark in 1449. All the kingdoms of the North were at that time elective; but the kingdom of Denmark soon after became hereditary.

* This is confirmed by original letters.

One of its kings, called Christian III., had such a tender affection for his brother Adolphus, or, at least, such a regard for his interest, as is seldom to be met with among princes. He was desirous of investing him with sovereign power, and yet he could not dismember his own dominions. He therefore divided with him the duchies of Holstein-Gottorp and Schleswig by an odd kind of agreement, the substance of which was, that the descendants of Adolphus should ever after govern Holstein in conjunction with the kings of Denmark; that those two duchies should belong to both in common; and that the King of Denmark should be able to do nothing in Holstein without the duke, nor the duke without the king. So strange a union, of which, however, we have had within these few years a similar instance in the same family, was, for nearly eighty years, the source of perpetual disputes between the crown of Denmark and the house of Holstein-Gottorp; the kings always endeavoring to oppress the dukes, and the dukes to render themselves independent. A struggle of this nature had cost the last duke his liberty and sovereignty, both of which, however, he recovered at the conferences of Altena in 1689, by the interposition of Sweden, England, and Holland; who became guaranties for the execution of the treaty. But as a treaty between princes is frequently no more than a giving way to necessity till such time as the stronger shall be able to crush the weaker, the contest was revived with greater virulence than ever between the new King of Denmark and the young duke. And while the duke was at Stockholm, the Danes had already

committed some acts of hostility in the country of Holstein, and had entered into a secret agreement with the King of Poland, to attack the King of Sweden himself.

Frederick Augustus, Elector of Saxony, whom neither the eloquence nor negotiations of the Abbé de Polignac, nor the great qualities of the Prince of Conti, his competitor for the throne, had been able to prevent from being chosen King of Poland about two years before, was a prince still less remarkable for his incredible strength of body than for his bravery and gallantry of soul. His court, next to that of Louis XIV., was the most splendid of any in Europe. Never was prince more generous or munificent, or bestowed his favors with a better grace. He had purchased the votes of one-half of the Polish nobility, and overawed the other by the approach of a Saxon army. As he thought he should have need of his troops in order to establish himself the more firmly on the throne, he wanted a pretext for retaining them in Poland; and he therefore resolved to employ them in attacking the King of Sweden, which he did on the following occasion:

Livonia, the most beautiful and the most fruitful province of the North, belonged formerly to the knights of the Teutonic order. The Russians, the Poles, and the Swedes, had severally disputed the possession of it. The Swedes had carried it from all the rest about a hundred years ago; and it had been formally ceded to them by the peace of Oliva.

The late King Charles XI., amidst his severities to his subjects in general, had not spared the Livo-

nians. He had stripped them of their privileges, and of part of their estates. Patkul, who unhappily has since become famous for his tragical death, was deputed by the nobility of Livonia to carry to the throne the complaints of the province. He addressed his master in a speech, respectful indeed, but bold, and full of that manly eloquence, which calamity, when joined to courage, never fails to inspire. But kings too frequently consider these public addresses as no more than vain ceremonies, which it is customary to suffer, without paying them any regard. Charles XI., however, who could play the hypocrite extremely well, when he was not hurried away by the violence of his passion, gently struck Patkul on the shoulder: "You have spoken for your country," said he, "like a brave man, and I esteem you for it; go on." Notwithstanding, in a few days after, he caused him to be declared guilty of high treason, and as such to be condemned to death. Patkul, who had hidden himself, made his escape, and carried his resentment with him to Poland, where he was afterwards admitted into the presence of King Augustus. Charles XI. was now dead; but Patkul's sentence was still in force, and his indignation still unabated. He represented to his Polish majesty the facility of conquering Livonia, the people of which were mad with despair, and ready to throw off the Swedish yoke; while the king was a child, and unable to make any resistance. These representations were well received by a prince, who already flattered himself with the agreeable hopes of this important conquest. Augustus had engaged at his coronation to

exert his most vigorous efforts, in order to recover the provinces which Poland had lost; and he imagined, that, by making an irruption into Livonia, he should at once please the people and establish his own power; in both of which particulars, however promising of success, he at last found himself fatally disappointed. Everything was soon gotten ready for a sudden invasion, which he resolved to make without having recourse to the vain formalities of declarations of war and manifestoes. The storm thickened at the same time on the side of Muscovy. The monarch who governed that kingdom merits the attention of posterity.

Peter Alexiowitz, Czar of Russia, had already made himself formidable by the battle he had gained over the Turks in 1697, and by the reduction of Azov, which opened to him the dominion of the Black Sea. But it was by actions still more glorious than even his victories, that he aspired to the name of Great. Muscovy, or Russia, comprehends the northern parts of Asia and of Europe, and from the frontiers of China extends, for the space of fifteen hundred leagues, to the borders of Poland and Sweden. This immense country, however, was hardly known to Europe, before the time of the Czar Peter. The Muscovites were less civilized than the Mexicans, when discovered by Cortes: born the slaves of masters as barbarous as themselves, they had sunk into a state of the most profound ignorance, into a total want of all the arts and sciences, and into such an insensibility of that want, as effectually suppressed every exertion of industry. An ancient law, which they held to be sacred,

forbade them, under pain of death, to leave their native country without permission of their patriarch. This law, made with a view to preclude them from all opportunities of becoming sensible of their slavery, was very acceptable to a people, who, in the depth of their misery and ignorance, disdained all commerce with foreign nations.

The era of the Muscovites began at the creation of the world: they reckoned up 7,207 years to the beginning of the last century, without being able to assign any reason for this computation. The first day of their year answered to the thirteenth of our month of November. The reason they allege for this regulation is, that it is probable that God created the world in autumn, the season when the fruits of the earth are in their full maturity. Thus, the only appearances of knowledge which they had were founded upon gross errors; not one of them ever dreamed that the autumn of Muscovy might possibly be the spring of another country, situated in an opposite climate. Nor is it long since the people at Moscow were going to burn the secretary of a Persian ambassador, who had foretold an eclipse of the sun. They did not so much as know the use of figures; but in all their computations made use of little beads strung upon brass wires. They had no other manner of reckoning in their counting-houses, not even in the treasury of the czar.

Their religion was, and still is, that of the Greek church, intermixed with many superstitious rites, to which they are the more strongly attached, in proportion as they are the more ridiculous, and

their burden the more intolerable. Few Muscovites would venture to eat a pigeon, because the Holy Ghost is painted in the form of a dove. They regularly observed four Lents in the year; and during those times of abstinence, they never presumed to eat either eggs or milk. God and St. Nicholas were the objects of their worship, and next to them the czar and the patriarch. The authority of the last was as unbounded as the people's ignorance. He pronounced sentences of death, and inflicted the most cruel punishments, without any possibility of an appeal from his tribunal. Twice a year he made a solemn procession on horseback, attended by all his clergy in order. The czar on foot held the bridle of his horse, and the people prostrated themselves before him in the streets, as the Tartars do before their grand lama. Confession was in use among them; but it was only in cases of the greatest crimes. In these absolution was necessary, but not repentance. They thought themselves pure in the sight of God, as soon as they received the benediction of their *papas*. Thus they passed, without remorse, from confession to theft and murder; and what among other Christians is a restraint from vice, with them was an encouragement to wickedness. On a fast-day, they would not even venture to drink milk; but on a festival, masters of families, priests, married women and maids, would make no scruple to intoxicate themselves with brandy. However, there were religious disputes among them as well as in other countries; but their greatest controversy was, whether laymen should make the sign of the cross with two fingers or with three.

One Jacob Nursuff, in the preceding reign, had raised a sedition in Astrakhan about this very quarrel. There were even some fanatics among them, as there are in those civilized nations where every one is a theologian; and Peter, who always carried justice to the extreme of cruelty, caused some of these wretched creatures, who were called Vosko-jesuits, to be committed to the flames.

The czar in his vast dominions, had many other subjects who were not Christians. The Tartars, inhabiting the western coasts of the Caspian Sea and the Palus Mæotis, were Mahometans; the Siberians, the Ostiaks, and the Samoyeds, who lie towards the frozen sea, were savages, some of whom were idolaters, and others had not the least knowledge of a God; and yet the Swedes who were sent prisoners among them, were better pleased with their manners than with those of the ancient Muscovites.

Peter Alexiowitz had received an education that tended still more to increase the barbarity of this part of the world. His natural disposition led him to caress strangers, before he knew what advantages he might derive from their acquaintance. Le Fort, as has been already observed, was the first instrument he employed to change the face of affairs in Muscovy. His mighty genius, which a barbarous education had hitherto checked but not destroyed, broke forth all of a sudden. He resolved to be a man, to command men, and to create a new nation. Many princes before him had renounced crowns, wearied out with the intolerable load of public affairs; but no man had ever divested himself

of the royal character, in order to learn the art of governing better: this was a stretch of heroism which was reserved for Peter the Great alone.

He left Muscovy in 1698, having reigned as yet but two years, and went to Holland, disguised under a common name, as if he had been a menial servant of that same M. Le Fort, whom he sent in quality of ambassador-extraordinary to the States-General. As soon as he arrived at Amsterdam, he enrolled his name among the shipwrights of the admiralty of the Indies, and wrought in the yard like the other mechanics. During his leisure hours he learned such parts of mathematics as are useful to a prince, fortification, navigation, and the art of drawing plans. He went into the workmen's shops, and examined all their manufactures: nothing could escape his observation. From thence he passed over into England, where having perfected himself in the art of ship-building, he returned to Holland, carefully observing everything that might turn to the advantage of his country. At last, after two years of travel and labor, to which no man but himself would have willingly submitted, he again made his appearance in Muscovy, with all the arts of Europe in his train. Artists of every kind followed him in abundance. Then were seen, for the first time, large Russian ships in the Baltic, and on the Black Sea and the ocean. Stately buildings, of a regular architecture, were raised among the Russian huts. He founded colleges, academies, printing-houses, and libraries. The cities were brought under a regular police. The clothes and customs of the people were gradually changed, though not with-

out some difficulty; and the Muscovites learned by degrees the true nature of a social state. Even their superstitious rites were abolished; the dignity of the patriarch was suppressed; and the czar declared himself the head of the church. This last enterprise, which would have cost a prince less absolute than Peter his throne and his life, succeeded almost without opposition, and insured to him the success of all his other innovations.

After having humbled an ignorant and a barbarous clergy, he ventured to make a trial of instructing them, though by that means he ran the risk of rendering them formidable; but he was too conscious of his own power to entertain any apprehension from that quarter. He caused philosophy and theology to be taught in the few monasteries that still remained. True it is, this theology still savors of that barbarous period in which Peter civilized his people. A gentleman of undoubted veracity assured me, that he was present at a public disputation, where the point of controversy was, whether the practice of smoking tobacco was a sin? The respondent alleged, that it was lawful to get drunk with brandy, but not to smoke, because the Holy Scriptures say, that: "That which proceedeth out of the mouth defileth a man, and that which entereth into it doth not defile him."

The monks were not satisfied with this reformation. Hardly had the czar erected his printing-houses, when these pious drones made use of them to publish declamations against their sovereign. One of them affirmed in print that Peter was Antichrist; and his arguments were, that he deprived

the living of their beards, and allowed the dead to be dissected in his academy. But another monk, who had a mind to make his fortune, refuted this book, and proved that Peter could not be Antichrist, because the number 666 was not to be found in his name. The libeller was broken upon the wheel, and the author of the refutation was made Bishop of Rezan.

The reformer of Muscovy enacted a very wholesome law, the want of which reflects disgrace upon many civilized nations. By this law, no man engaged in the service of the state, no citizen established in trade, and especially no minor, was allowed to retire into a convent.

Peter knew of what infinite consequence it was to prevent useful subjects from consecrating themselves to idleness, and to hinder young people from disposing of their liberty, at an age when they are incapable of disposing of the least part of their patrimony. This law, however, so plainly calculated for the general interest of mankind, is daily eluded by the industry of the monks; as if they, forsooth, were gainers by peopling their convents at the expense of their country.

The czar not only subjected the Church to the State, after the example of the Turkish emperors, but, what was a more masterly stroke of policy, he dissolved a militia of much the same nature as that of the janissaries: and what the sultans had attempted in vain, he accomplished in a short time: he disbanded the Russian janissaries, who were called strelitzes, and who kept the czars in subjection. These troops, more formidable to their

masters than to their neighbors, consisted of about thirty thousand foot, one-half of which remained at Moscow, while the other half was stationed upon the frontiers. The pay of a strelitz was no more than four roubles a year; but this deficiency was amply compensated by privileges and extortions. Peter at first formed a company of foreigners, among whom he enrolled his own name, and did not think it below him to begin the service in the character of a drummer, and to perform the duties of that mean office; so much did the nation stand in need of examples! By degrees he became an officer. He gradually raised new regiments; and, at last, finding himself master of a well-disciplined army, he broke the strelitzes who durst not disobey.

The cavalry was nearly the same as that of Poland, or France, when this last kingdom was no more than an assemblage of fiefs. The Russian gentlemen mounted horse at their own expense, and fought without discipline, and sometimes without any other arms than a sabre or a bow, incapable of obeying, and consequently of conquering.

Peter the Great taught them to obey, both by the example he set them, and by the punishments he inflicted; for he served in the quality of a soldier and subaltern officer, and as czar he severely punished the boyards, that is, the gentlemen, who pretended that it was the privilege of their order not to serve but by their own consent. He established a regular body to serve the artillery, and took five hundred bells from the churches to found cannon. In the year 1714, he had thirteen thousand brass cannon. He likewise formed some troops of dra-

goons, a kind of militia very suitable to the genius of the Muscovites, and to the size of their horses, which are small. In 1738 the Russians had thirty regiments of dragoons, consisting of a thousand men each, and well accoutred.

He likewise established the Russian hussars; and had even a school of engineers, in a country where, before his time, no one understood the elements of geometry.

He was himself a good engineer; but his chief excellence lay in his knowledge of naval affairs: he was an able sea-captain, a skilful pilot, a good sailor, an expert shipwright, and his knowledge of these arts was the more meritorious, as he was born with a great dread of the water. In his youth he could not pass over a bridge without trembling: on all these occasions he caused the wooden windows of his coach to be shut; but of this constitutional weakness he soon got the better, by his courage and resolution.

He caused a beautiful harbor to be built at the mouth of the Tanias, near Azov, in which he proposed to keep a number of galleys; and some time after, thinking that these vessels, so long, light, and flat, would probably succeed in the Baltic, he had upwards of three hundred of them built at his favorite city of St. Petersburg. He showed his subjects the method of building ships with fir only, and taught them the art of navigation. He had even learned surgery, and, in a case of necessity, has been known to tap a dropsical person. He was well versed in mechanics, and instructed the artists.

Indeed the revenue of the czar, when compared

to the immense extent of his dominions, was very inconsiderable. It never amounted to four and twenty millions of our money, reckoning the mark at about fifty livres, as we do to-day, though perhaps we may do otherwise to-morrow. But a man may always be accounted rich, who has it in his power to accomplish great undertakings. It is not the scarcity of money that weakens a state; it is the want of hands, and of men of ability.

Russia, notwithstanding the women are fruitful and the men robust, is far from being populous. Peter himself, in civilizing his dominions, unhappily contributed to their depopulation. Frequent levies in his wars which were long unsuccessful; nations transported from the coasts of the Caspian Sea to those of the Baltic, destroyed by fatigue, or cut off by diseases; three-fourths of the Muscovite children dying of the smallpox which is more dangerous in those climates than in any other; in a word, the melancholy effects of a government savage for a long time, and even barbarous in its policy; to all these causes it is owing, that in this country, comprehending so great a part of the continent, there are still vast deserts. Russia, at present, is supposed to contain five hundred thousand families of gentlemen; two hundred thousand lawyers; something more than five millions of citizens and peasants, who pay a sort of tax; six hundred thousand men who live in the provinces conquered from the Swedes; the Cossacks in the Ukraine, and the Tartars that are subject to Muscovy, do not exceed two millions; in fine, it appears that in this immense country, there are not above

fourteen millions of men, that is, a little more than two-thirds of the inhabitants of France.

While Peter was employed in changing the laws, the manners, the militia, and the very face of his country, he likewise resolved to increase his greatness by encouraging commerce which at once constitutes the riches of a particular state, and contributes to the interest of the world in general. He resolved to make Russia the centre of trade between Asia and Europe. He determined to join the Düna, the Volga, and the Tanais, by canals, of which he drew the plans; and thus to open a new passage from the Baltic to the Euxine and Caspian Seas, and from these seas to the northern ocean.

The port of Archangel, frozen up for nine months in the year, and which could not be entered without making a long and dangerous circuit, he did not think sufficiently commodious. From the year 1700, he had formed a design of building a port upon the Baltic Sea, that should become the magazine of the North, and of raising a city that should prove the capital of his empire.

He was already attempting to find out a north-east passage to China; and the manufactures of Pekin and Paris were designed to embellish his new city.

A road of 754 versts long, running through marshes that were to be drained, led from Moscow to his new city. Most of these projects were executed by his own hands; and the two empresses, who have successively followed him, have even improved on his schemes when they were practi-

cable, and abandoned none but such as it was impossible to accomplish.

He was always travelling up and down his dominions, as much as his wars would allow him; but he travelled like a legislator and natural philosopher, examining nature everywhere, endeavoring to correct or perfect her; sounding with his own hands the depth of seas and rivers; repairing sluices, visiting docks, causing mines to be searched for, assaying metals, ordering accurate plans to be drawn, in the execution of which he himself assisted.

He built, on a very wild and uncultivated spot, the imperial city of St. Petersburg which now contains sixty thousand houses, and is the residence of a splendid court where all the refined pleasures are known and enjoyed. He built the harbor of Cronstadt, on the Neva, and St. Croix on the frontiers of Persia; erected forts on the Ukraine, and in Siberia; established offices of admiralty at Archangel, St. Petersburg, Astrakhan, and Azov; founded arsenals, and built and endowed hospitals. All his own houses were mean and executed in bad taste; but he spared no expense in rendering the public buildings grand and magnificent.

The sciences, which in other countries have been the slow product of so many ages, were, by his care and industry, imported into Russia in full perfection. He established an academy on the plan of the famous societies of Paris and London. The Delisles, the Bulfingers, the Hermanns, the Bernouillis, and the celebrated Wolff, a man who excelled in every branch of philosophy, were all in-

vited and brought to St. Petersburg at a great expense. This academy still subsists; and the Muscovites, at length, have philosophers of their own nation.

He obliged the young nobility to travel for improvement, and to bring back into Russia the politeness of foreign countries; and I have seen some young Russians who were men of genius and of knowledge. Thus it was that a single man changed the face of the greatest empire in the universe. It is, however, a shocking reflection that this reformer of mankind should have been deficient in that first of all virtues, the virtue of humanity. Brutality in his pleasures, ferocity in his manners, and cruelty in his punishments, sullied the lustre of so many virtues. He civilized his subjects, and yet himself remained a barbarian. He would sometimes, with his own hands, execute sentences of death upon the unhappy criminals; and, in the midst of a revel, would show his dexterity in cutting off heads. There are princes in Africa who, with their own hands, shed the blood of their subjects; but these kings are always detested as barbarians. The death of a son whom he ought to have corrected, or at most disinherited, would render the memory of Peter the object of universal hatred, were it not that the great and many blessings he bestowed on his subjects, were almost sufficient to excuse his cruelty to his own offspring.

Such was the Czar Peter; and his great projects were little more than in embryo, when he joined the kings of Poland and Denmark against a child whom they all despised. The founder of the Rus-

sian Empire was ambitious of being a conqueror; and such he thought he might easily become by the prosecution of a war which, being entered into with so much prudence, could not fail, he imagined, of proving advantageous to his subjects: the art of war was a new art which it was necessary to teach his people.

Besides, he wanted a port on the east side of the Baltic, to facilitate the execution of all his schemes. He wanted the province of Ingria, which lies to the northeast of Livonia. The Swedes were in possession of it, and from them he resolved to take it by force. His predecessors had had claims upon Ingria, Esthonia, and Livonia; and the present seemed a favorable opportunity for reviving these claims which had lain buried for a hundred years, and had been cancelled by the sanction of treaties. He therefore made a league with the King of Poland, to wrest from young Charles XII. all the territories that are bounded by the Gulf of Finland, the Baltic Sea, Poland, and Muscovy.

CHAPTER II.

A sudden and surprising change in the character of Charles XII. at eighteen years of age. He undertakes a war against Denmark, Poland and Muscovy, finishes the Danish war in six weeks with eight thousand Swedes, defeats eighty thousand Russians, and then penetrates into Poland. A description of Poland, and its form of government. Charles gains several battles; becomes master of Poland, where he prepares to nominate a king.

In this manner did three powerful sovereigns menace the infancy of Charles XII. The news of these preparations struck the Swedes with consternation, and alarmed the council. All the great generals were now dead; and everything was to be feared under the reign of a young king who had hitherto given no very favorable impressions of his character. He was hardly ever present at the council; and when he did attend, it was only to sit cross-legged on the table, absent-minded, inattentive, and seemingly regardless of everything that passed.

The council happened to hold a deliberation in his presence concerning the dangerous situation of affairs; some of the members proposed to avert the storm by negotiations, when all on a sudden Charles rose with an air of gravity and assurance, like a man of superior consequence who has chosen his side: "Gentlemen," said he, "I am resolved never to begin an unjust war, nor ever to finish a just one but by the destruction of my enemies.

My resolution is fixed. I will attack the first that shall declare against me; and, after having conquered him, I hope I shall be able to strike terror into the rest." All the old counsellors were astonished at this declaration, and looked at one another without daring to reply. Agreeably surprised to find their king possessed of such noble sentiments, and ashamed to be less sanguine in their expectations than he, they received his orders for the war with admiration.

They were still more surprised when they saw him at once bid adieu to the most innocent amusements of youth. The moment he began to make preparations for the war, he entered on a new course of life, from which he never afterwards deviated in one single instance. Full of the idea of Alexander and Cæsar, he proposed to imitate those two conquerors in everything but their vices. No longer did he indulge himself in magnificence, sports, and recreations: he reduced his table to the most rigid frugality. He had formerly been fond of gayety and dress; but from that time he was never clad otherwise than as a common soldier. He was supposed to have entertained a passion for a lady of his court: whether there was any foundation for this supposition does not appear; certain it is, he ever after renounced all commerce with women, not only for fear of being governed by them, but likewise to set an example of continence for his soldiers whom he resolved to confine within the strictest discipline; perhaps too from the vanity of being thought the only king that could conquer a passion so difficult to be overcome. He likewise

determined to abstain from wine during the rest of his life. Some people have told me that his only reason for taking this resolution was to subdue his vicious inclinations in everything, and to add one virtue more to his former stock; but the greater number have assured me, that it was to punish himself for an act of gross rudeness and an affront he had offered to a lady at table, even in presence of the queen-mother. If that be true, this condemnation of his own conduct, and this abstinence which he imposed on himself during the remainder of his life, is a species of heroism no less worthy of admiration*.

He began by assuring the Duke of Holstein, his brother-in-law, of a speedy assistance. Eight thousand men were immediately sent into Pomerania, a province bordering on Holstein, in order to enable the duke to make head against the Danes. The duke indeed had need of them. His dominions were already laid waste, the castle of Gottorp taken, and the city of Tönning pressed by an obstinate siege, to which the King of Denmark had come in person, in order to enjoy a conquest, which he held to be certain. This spark began to throw the empire into a flame. On the one side the Saxon troops of the King of Poland, those of Brandenburg, Wolfenbüttel, and Hesse-Cassel, advanced to join the Danes. On the other, the King of Sweden's eight thousand men, the troops of Hanover and Zell, and three Dutch regiments, came to the assistance of the duke. While the little country of Holstein

* If we may judge from the whole tenor of his life and character, he had in fact no tenderness in his nature.

was thus the theatre of war, two squadrons, the one from England, and the other from Holland, appeared in the Baltic. These two states were guaranties of the treaty of Altena which the Danes had broken, and were eager to assist the Duke of Holstein, because it was to the interest of their trade to check the growing power of the King of Denmark. They knew that should he once become master of The Sound, he would impose the most rigorous laws upon the commercial nations, as soon as he should be able to do it with impunity. This consideration has long induced the English and the Dutch to maintain, as much as they can, a balance of power between the princes of the North. They joined the young King of Sweden who seemed to be in danger of being crushed by such a powerful combination of enemies, and assisted him for the very same reason that the others attacked him; namely, because they thought him incapable of defending himself.

He was taking the diversion of boar-hunting when he received the news of the Saxons having invaded Livonia. This pastime he enjoyed in a manner equally new and dangerous. No other weapons were used but sharp-pointed sticks with which the hunters defended themselves behind a cord stretched between two trees. A boar of a huge size came straight against the king who, after a long struggle, by the help of the cord and stick, levelled him to the ground. It must be acknowledged that in reading of such adventures as these, in considering the surprising strength of King Augustus, and reviewing the travels of the czar, we

are almost tempted to think that we live in the times of Hercules and Theseus.

Charles set out for his first campaign on the eighth day of May, new style, in the year 1700, and left Stockholm, whither he never returned. An innumerable company of people attended him to the port of Karlskroña, offering up their prayers for his safety, bedewing the ground with their tears, and expressing their admiration for his virtue. Before he left Sweden, he established at Stockholm a council of defence, composed of several senators, who were to take care of whatever concerned the navy, the army, and the fortifications of the country. The body of the senate were provisionally to regulate everything besides, in the interior government of the kingdom. Having thus settled the administration of public affairs, and freed his mind from every other care, he devoted himself entirely to war. His fleet consisted of three and forty vessels: that in which he sailed, named the King Charles, and the largest that had ever been seen, was a ship of a hundred and twenty guns. Count Piper, his first minister, General Renschild, and the Count de Guiscard, the French ambassador in Sweden, embarked along with him. He joined the squadrons of the allies. The Danish fleet declined the combat, and gave the three combined fleets an opportunity of approaching so near to Copenhagen as to throw some bombs into it.

Certain it is, it was the king himself that first proposed to General Renschild to make a descent, and to besiege Copenhagen by land, while it should be blocked up by sea. Renschild was surprised to

receive a proposal that discovered as much prudence as courage, from such a young and inexperienced prince. Everything was soon gotten ready for the descent. Orders were given for the embarkation of five thousand men who lay upon the coast of Sweden, and who were joined to the troops they had on board. The king quitted his large ship and went aboard a frigate, and they then began to despatch towards the shore three hundred grenadiers in small shallops. Among the shallops were some flat-bottomed boats that carried the fascines, the chevaux-de-frise, and the instruments of the pioneers. Five hundred chosen men followed in other shallops. Last of all came the king's men-of-war, with two English and two Dutch frigates, which were to favor the landing of the troops under cover of their cannon.

Copenhagen, the capital of Denmark, is situated in the isle of Zealand, in the midst of a beautiful plain, having The Sound on the northeast, and on the east the Baltic, where the King of Sweden then lay. At the unexpected movement of the vessels, which threatened a descent, the inhabitants were struck with consternation. Alarmed at the inactivity of their own fleet, and the motion of the Swedish ships, they looked round with terror, to observe where the storm would fall. Charles's fleet stopped over against Humblebeck, within seven miles of Copenhagen. In that place the Danes immediately drew up their cavalry. Their foot were posted behind thick intrenchments; and what artillery they could bring thither, was pointed against the Swedes.

The king then quitted his frigate, to throw himself into the first shallop, at the head of his guards. The French ambassador being always at his side, "Sir," said the king to him, in Latin, for he would never speak French, "you have no quarrel with the Danes, you need go no farther, if you please." "Sir," answered the Count de Guiscard, in French, "the king, my master, has ordered me to attend your majesty. I hope you will not this day banish me from your court which never before appeared so splendid." So saying, he gave his hand to the king who leaped into the shallop, whither he was followed by Count Piper and the ambassador. They advanced under shelter of the cannon of the ships that favored the landing. The small boats were still about three hundred paces from the shore. Charles, impatient to land, jumped into the sea, sword in hand, the water reaching above his waist. His ministers, the French ambassador, the officers and soldiers, immediately followed his example, and marched up to the shore, amidst a shower of musket-balls from the enemy. The king, who had never in his life before heard a discharge of muskets loaded with ball, asked Major Stuart, who stood next to him, what meant that whistling which he heard. "It is the noise of the musket-balls, which they are firing at you," replied the major. "Very well," said the king, "henceforward that shall be my music." At that instant the major received a shot in his shoulder, and a lieutenant on the other side of him fell dead at his feet.

It is usual for troops that are attacked in their trenches to be beaten, because the assailants have

always an impetuosity of courage, which the defenders cannot have; and besides, to wait for the enemy in our lines is frequently a confession of our own weakness, and of their superiority. The Danish horse and foot took to their heels, after a feeble resistance. The king having become master of their intrenchments, fell upon his knees to return thanks to God for the first success of his arms. He forthwith caused redoubts to be raised towards the town, and himself marked out the place for the encampment. Meanwhile he sent back his vessels to Schonen, a port of Sweden in the vicinity of Copenhagen, for a reinforcement of nine thousand men. Everything conspired to favor the ardor of Charles's courage. The nine thousand men were upon the shore ready to embark, and next day a favorable wind brought them safe to the place of their destination.

All this passed within sight of the Danish fleet, which dared not venture to advance. Copenhagen, struck with terror, immediately sent deputies to the king, beseeching him not to bombard the city. He received them on horseback, at the head of his regiment of guards; and the deputies fell upon their knees before him. He exacted from the citizens four hundred thousand rix-dollars, commanding them, at the same time, to supply his camp with all kinds of provisions, for which he assured them they should be honestly paid. They brought the provisions because they durst not disobey; but they little expected that conquerors would condescend to pay for them; and those who brought them were surprised to find that they were generously

and instantly paid, even by the meanest soldier in the army. There had long prevailed among the Swedish troops a strict discipline which had greatly contributed to the success of their arms; and the king rendered it still more rigid. No soldier durst refuse to pay for what he had bought, still less to go plundering, nor even so much as to go out of the camp. What is more, he would not allow his troops, after a victory, to strip the bodies of the dead until they had obtained his permission; and he easily brought them to the observance of this injunction. Prayers were said regularly in his camp twice a day; at seven in the morning and four in the afternoon; and he never failed to attend them himself in order to give his soldiers an example of piety as well as of valor. His camp, which was better regulated than Copenhagen, had everything in abundance; the peasants choosing much rather to sell their provisions to their enemies, the Swedes, than to the Danes who did not pay them so well. Even the citizens were more than once obliged to come to the Swedish camp to purchase those provisions which they could not find in their own markets.

The King of Denmark was then in Holstein, whither he seemed to have gone for no other purpose than to raise the siege of Tönning. He saw the Baltic covered with the enemies' ships, and a young conqueror already master of Zealand, and just upon the point of taking possession of his capital. He caused an edict to be published throughout all his dominions, promising liberty to everyone that should take up arms against the

Swedes. This declaration was of great weight in a country which was formerly free, but where all the peasants, and even many of the citizens, are nowadays slaves. Charles sent word to the King of Denmark, that his only intention in making war was to oblige him to come to a peace; and that he must either resolve to do justice to the Duke of Holstein, or see Copenhagen levelled with the ground, and his dominions laid waste with fire and sword. The Dane was too happy in having to do with a conqueror who prided himself on his regard for justice. A congress was held in the town of Travendal which lies on the frontiers of Holstein. The King of Sweden would not allow the negotiations to be protracted by the arts of ministers; but determined to have the treaty finished with the same rapidity with which he had made his descent upon Zealand. In effect, a peace was concluded, on the fifth of August, to the advantage of the Duke of Holstein who was indemnified for all the expenses of the war, and delivered from oppression. The King of Sweden, fully satisfied with having succored his ally, and humbled his enemy, would accept nothing for himself. Thus Charles XII. at eighteen years of age, began and finished this war in less than six weeks.

Exactly at the same time, the King of Poland invested Riga, the capital of Livonia; and the czar was advancing on the east, at the head of nearly a hundred thousand men. Riga was defended by the old Count d'Alberg, a Swedish general, who, at the age of eighty, joined all the fire of youth to the experience of sixty campaigns. Count Flemming,

afterwards minister of Poland, a man of distinguished ability as well in the field as the cabinet, and Patkul the Livonian, pushed the siege with great vigor, under the direction of the king; but notwithstanding several advantages which the besiegers had gained, the experience of old Count d'Alberg baffled all their efforts, and the King of Poland began to despair of being able to take the town. At last he laid hold of an honorable pretext for raising the siege. Riga was full of merchants' goods belonging to the Dutch. The States-General ordered their ambassador at the court of Augustus, to represent the matter to his majesty. The King of Poland did not long resist their importunities, and agreed to raise the siege rather than occasion the least damage to his allies, who were not greatly surprised at this stretch of complaisance to the real cause of which they were no strangers.

The only thing that Charles had to do now, towards the finishing of his first campaign, was to march against his rival in glory, Peter Alexiowitz. He was the more exasperated against him, as there were still at Stockholm three Muscovite ambassadors who had lately sworn to the renewal of an inviolable peace. Possessed as he was himself of the most incorruptible integrity, he could not conceive how a legislator like the czar could make a jest of what ought to be held so sacred. The young prince whose sense of honor was extremely refined, never imagined that there could be one system of morality for kings, and another for private persons. The Emperor of Muscovy had just published a manifesto which he would have done better to sup-

press. He therein alleged, as the reason of the war, the little respect that had been shown him when he went incognito to Riga, and the extravagant prices his ambassadors had been obliged to pay for provisions. Such were the mighty injuries for which he ravaged Ingria, with eighty thousand men!

At the head of this great army he appeared before Narva, on the first of October, a season more severe in that climate than the month of January is at Paris. The czar, who in such weather would sometimes ride post for four hundred leagues, to see a mine or a canal, was not more sparing of his troops than of himself. He knew, moreover, that the Swedes, ever since the time of Gustavus Adolphus, could make war in the depth of winter as well as in summer; and he wanted to accustom the Russians likewise to forget all distinction of seasons, and to render them, one day, equal to the Swedes. Thus at a time when frost and snow compel other nations in more temperate climates to agree to a suspension of arms, the czar Peter besieged Narva, within thirty degrees of the pole, and Charles XII. advanced to its relief. The czar had no sooner arrived before the place, than he immediately put in practice what he had learned in his travels. He marked out his camp, fortified it on all sides, raised redoubts at certain distances, and opened the trenches himself. He had given the command of his troops to the Duke de Croi, a German, and an able general, but who at that time was little assisted by the Russian officers. As for himself, he had no other rank in the army than that of

a simple lieutenant. He thereby gave an example of military obedience to his nobility, hitherto unacquainted with discipline, and accustomed to march at the head of ill-armed slaves, without experience and without order. There was nothing strange in seeing him who had turned carpenter at Amsterdam in order to procure himself fleets, serve as lieutenant at Narva to teach his subjects the art of war.

The Muscovites are strong and indefatigable, and perhaps as courageous as the Swedes; but it requires time and discipline to render troops warlike and invincible. The only regiments that could be depended upon were commanded by some German officers; but their number was very inconsiderable. The rest were barbarians forced from their forests, and covered with the skins of wild beasts; some armed with arrows, and others with clubs. Few of them had fusees; none of them had ever seen a regular siege; and there was not one good cannoneer in the whole army. A hundred and fifty cannon, which one would have thought must have soon reduced the little town of Narva to ashes, were hardly able to make a breach, while the artillery of the city mowed down at every discharge whole ranks of the enemy in their trenches. Narva was almost without fortifications; the Baron de Hoorn, who commanded there, had not a thousand regular troops; and yet this immense army could not reduce it in ten weeks.

It was now the 15th of November, when the czar learned that the King of Sweden had crossed the sea with two hundred transports, and

was advancing to the relief of Narva. The Swedes were not above twenty thousand strong. The czar had no advantage but that of numbers. Therefore, far from despising his enemy, he employed every art in order to crush him. Not content with eighty thousand men, he resolved to oppose to him another army still, and to check his progress at every step. He had already given orders for the march of about thirty thousand men, who were advancing from Pleskoff with great expedition. He then took a step that would have rendered him contemptible, could a legislator who had performed such great and glorious actions incur that imputation. He left his camp, where his presence was necessary, to go in quest of this new army, which might have arrived well enough without him, and seemed by this conduct to betray his fear of engaging in his intrenchments a young and inexperienced prince who might come to attack him.

Be that as it may, he resolved to enclose Charles XII. between two armies. Nor was this all: a detachment of thirty thousand men from the camp before Narva was posted at a league's distance from the city, directly in the King of Sweden's road: twenty thousand strelitzes were placed farther off, on the same road; and five thousand others composed an advanced guard; and he must necessarily force his way through all these troops before he could reach the camp which was fortified with a rampart and double fosse. The King of Sweden had landed at Pernau, on the gulf of Riga, with about sixteen thousand foot, and little more than four thousand horse. From Pernau he made

a flying march to Revel, followed by all his cavalry, and only by four thousand foot. He always marched in the van of his army, without waiting for the rear. He soon found himself, with his eight thousand men only, before the first posts of the enemy. He immediately resolved, without the least hesitation, to attack them, one after another, before they could possibly learn with what a small number they had to engage. The Muscovites seeing the Swedes approaching them, imagined they had a whole army to encounter. The advanced guard of five thousand men, posted among rocks, a station where one hundred resolute men might have stopped the march of a large army, fled at their approach. The twenty thousand men that lay behind them, perceiving the flight of their fellow soldiers, took the alarm and carried their terror and confusion with them into the camp. All the posts were carried in two days; and what upon other occasions would have been reckoned three distinct victories, did not retard the king's march for the space of one hour. He appeared then at last with his eight thousand men, exhausted by the fatigues of so long a march, before a camp of eighty thousand Muscovites, defended by a hundred and fifty pieces of cannon; and, scarce allowing his troops any time for rest, he instantly gave orders for the attack.

The signal was two fusees, and the word in German, "With the aid of God." A general officer having represented to him the greatness of the danger, "What," says he, "do not you think, that with my eight thousand brave Swedes, I may easily

beat eighty thousand Russians?" But soon after, fearing that what he had said might savor too much of gasconade, he ran after the officer, and, "Are not you," says he, "of the same opinion? Have not I a double advantage over the enemy? One, that their cavalry can be of no service to them; the other, that the place, being narrow, their number will only incommode them; and thus in reality I shall be stronger than they." The officer did not care to differ with him; and thus they marched against the Muscovites about midday, on the 30th of November, 1700.

When their cannon had made a breach in the Muscovite intrenchments, the Swedes advanced with fixed bayonets, having a furious shower of snow on their backs, which drove full in the face of the enemy. The Russians stood the shock for half an hour, without flinching. The king made his attack upon the right of the camp where the czar's quarters lay, hoping to come to a rencounter with him, as he did not know that he had gone in quest of the forty thousand men who were daily expected to arrive. At the first discharge of the enemy's muskets, he received a shot in his neck; but as it was a spent ball, it lodged in the folds of his black neck-cloth, and did him no harm. His horse was killed under him. M. de Sparre told me that the king mounted another horse with great agility, saying, "These fellows make me go through my exercise"; and continued to fight and give orders with the same presence of mind. After an engagement of three hours, the intrenchments were forced on all sides. The king pursued the right of

the enemy as far as the river Narva, with his left wing; if we may be allowed to call by that name about four thousand men who were in pursuit of nearly forty thousand. The bridge broke under the fugitives, and the river was immediately filled with dead bodies. The survivors returned to their camp, without knowing whither they went; and finding some barracks, they took post behind them. There they defended themselves for a while, as they were not able to make their escape; but as last their generals, Dolgoruki, Golovkin, and Federowitz, surrendered themselves to the king, and laid their arms at his feet; and while they were presenting them to him, the Duke de Croi came up and surrendered himself with thirty officers.

Charles received all these prisoners of distinction with as much civility and politeness as if he had been paying them the honors of an entertainment in his own court. He detained none but the general officers. All the subalterns and common soldiers were disarmed and conducted to the river Narva, where they were supplied with boats for passing over, and allowed to return to their own country. In the meantime night came on and the right wing of the Muscovites still continued the fight. The Swedes had not lost above six hundred men. Eight thousand Muscovites had been killed in their intrenchments; many were drowned; many had crossed the river; and yet there still remained in the camp a sufficient number to cut off the Swedes to the last man. But the loss of battles is not so much owing to the number of the killed, as to the timidity of those who survive. The king em-

ployed the remaining hours of the day in seizing on the enemy's artillery. He took possession of an advantageous post between the camp and the city, where he slept a few hours upon the ground, wrapped up in his cloak, intending, at daybreak, to fall upon the left wing of the enemy, which was not yet entirely routed. But at two o'clock in the morning General Wade who commanded that wing, having heard of the gracious reception the king had given to the other generals, and of his having dismissed all the subaltern officers and soldiers, sent a messenger to him, begging he would grant him the same favor. The conqueror replied that he should have it, provided he would come at the head of his troops, and make them lay their arms and colors at his feet. Soon after the general appeared with his Muscovites, to the number of about thirty thousand. They marched, both soldiers and officers, with their heads uncovered, through less than seven thousand Swedes. The soldiers, as they passed the king, threw their guns and swords upon the ground, and the officers presented him with their ensigns and colors. He caused the whole of this multitude to be conducted over the river, without detaining a single soldier. Had he kept them, the number of prisoners would have been at least five times greater than that of the conquerors.

After this, he entered victoriously into Narva, accompanied by the Duke de Croi, and other general officers of the Muscovites. He ordered their swords to be restored to them all; and knowing that they wanted money and that the merchants

of Narva would not lend them any, he sent a thousand ducats to the Duke de Croi, and five hundred to every Muscovite officer, who could not sufficiently admire the civility of this treatment, of which they were incapable of forming the least conception. An account of the victory was immediately drawn up at Narva, in order to be sent to Stockholm, and to the allies of Sweden; but the king expunged with his own hand every circumstance in the relation that redounded too much to his own honor, or seemed to reflect upon the czar. His modesty, however, could not hinder them from striking at Stockholm several medals to perpetuate the memory of these events. Among others they struck one which represented the king on one side, standing on a pedestal, to which were chained a Muscovite, a Dane, and a Polander; and on the reverse a Hercules holding his club, and treading upon a Cerberus, with this inscription: *Tres uno contudit ictu.*

Among the prisoners taken at the battle of Narva, there was one whose fate exhibited a remarkable instance of the great inconstancy of fortune. He was the eldest son and heir of the King of Georgia; his name the Czarafis Artschelou. This title of czarafis, among the Tartars, as well as in Muscovy, signifies prince, or son of the czar; for the word *czar,* or *tsar,* signified king among the ancient Scythians from whom all these people are descended, and is not derived from the Cæsars of Rome, so long unknown to these barbarians. His father Mittelleski, czar and master of the most beautiful part of the country lying between the

mountains of Ararat and the eastern coast of the Black Sea, having been expelled from his kingdom by his own subjects, in 1688, had rather chosen to throw himself into the arms of the Emperor of Muscovy, than to apply to the Turks for assistance. His son, a youth of nineteen years of age, followed Peter the Great in his expedition against the Swedes, and was taken fighting by some Finland soldiers who had already stripped him, and were upon the point of killing him. Count Renschild rescued him from their hands, supplied him with clothes, and presented him to his master. Charles sent him to Stockholm where the unfortunate prince died a few years after. The king, upon seeing him depart, could not help making, in the hearing of his officers, a very natural reflection on the strange fate of an Asiatic prince born at the foot of Mount Caucasus, and going to live a prisoner amid the snows of Sweden. "It is just," says he, "as if I were one day to be a prisoner among the Crim Tartars." These words made no impression at that time; but, in the sequel, there was but too much occasion to remember them, when the event proved them to be a prediction.

The czar was advancing, by long marches, with a body of forty thousand Russians, in full hopes of surrounding his enemy on all sides; but before he had proceeded half way, he received intelligence of the battle of Narva, and of the dispersion of his whole army. He was not so foolish as to think of attacking with his forty thousand raw and undisciplined troops a conqueror who had lately defeated eighty

thousand men in their intrenchments. He returned home with a determined resolution of disciplining his troops at the same time that he civilized his subjects. "I know," says he, "that the Swedes will beat us for a long time; but, at last, they will teach us to beat them." Moscow, his capital, was in the utmost terror and consternation at the news of this defeat. Such was the pride and ignorance of the people that they actually imagined they had been conquered by a power more than human, and that the Swedes were so many magicians. This opinion was so general that public prayers were ordered to be put up to St. Nicholas, the patron of Muscovy, on the occasion. The form of these prayers is too singular to be omitted. It runs thus:

"O thou, who art our perpetual comforter in all our adversities, great St. Nicholas, infinitely powerful, by what sin have we offended thee, in our sacrifices, kneelings, bowings, and thanksgivings, that thou hast thus abandoned us? We implored thy assistance against these terrible, insolent, enraged, dreadful, unconquerable destroyers, when, like lions and bears robbed of their young, they fell upon, terrified, wounded, and slew by thousands, us who are thy people. As it is impossible that this should have happened without sorcery and witchcraft, we beseech thee, O great St. Nicholas, to be our champion and standard-bearer, to deliver us from this troop of sorcerers, and to drive them far from our frontiers, with the recompense they deserve."

While the Muscovites were thus complaining of their defeat to St. Nicholas, Charles XII. returned

thanks to God, and prepared himself for new victories.

The King of Poland had reason to fear that his enemy, already victorious over the Danes and the Muscovites, would soon turn his arms against him. He entered into a closer alliance with the czar than ever he had done before. These two princes agreed upon an interview, in order to concert their measures. They met at Birzen, a small town in Lithuania, without any of those formalities which serve only to retard business, and neither suited their situation nor their humor. The princes of the North visit one another with a familiarity that has not yet been shown in the more southern parts of Europe. Peter and Augustus spent fifteen days together, in the enjoyment of pleasures which were even somewhat extravagant; for the czar, amidst his cares for the reformation of his subjects, could never correct his dangerous propension to debauchery.

The King of Poland engaged to furnish the czar with fifty thousand German troops which were to be hired from several princes, and for which the czar was to pay. Peter, on the other hand, was to send fifty thousand Russians into Poland to learn the art of war, and promised to pay to Augustus three millions of rix-dollars in two years. This treaty, had it been carried into execution, might have proved fatal to the King of Sweden: it was a sure and ready method of rendering the Muscovites good soldiers: perhaps it was forging chains for a part of Europe.

Charles XII. exerted his utmost endeavors to

prevent the King of Poland from reaping any benefit from this league. After having passed the winter at Narva, he appeared in Livonia, in the neighborhood of Riga, the very town which Augustus had in vain besieged. The Saxon troops were posted along the river Düna which is very broad in that place; and Charles who lay on the other side of the river, was obliged to dispute the passage. The Saxons were not commanded by their own prince, who was then sick, but were headed by Marshal Stenau, who acted as general, under whom commanded Prince Ferdinand Duke of Courland, and that same Patkul, who had formerly, at the hazard of his life, vindicated the privileges of his country, against Charles XI. by his pen, and now defended the same cause against Charles XII. by his arms. The King of Sweden had caused some large boats to be built of a new construction, whose sides were much higher than ordinary and could be raised or let down like a draw-bridge. When raised they covered the troops on board, and when let down they served as a bridge to land them. He likewise made use of another artifice. Having observed that the wind blew from the north where he lay, toward the south where the enemy were encamped, he set fire to a large heap of wet straw, which diffusing a thick smoke over the river, prevented the Saxons from seeing his troops, or observing what he was going to do. Under cover of this cloud, he despatched some barks filled with more of the same smoking straw; so that the cloud always increasing, and being driven by the wind directly into the faces of the

enemy, rendered it impossible for them to know whether the king was crossing or not. Meanwhile, he alone conducted the execution of his stratagem; and when he had reached the middle of the river, he said to General Renschild: "Well, the Düna will be as favorable to us as the sea at Copenhagen; take my word for it, general, we shall beat them." He arrived at the other side in a quarter of an hour and was sorry to find that he was only the fourth person that leaped on shore. He forthwith landed his cannon, and drew up his troops in order of battle, while the enemy blinded with smoke, could make no opposition, except by a few random shots. At last the mist being dispersed by the wind, the Saxons saw the King of Sweden already advancing against them.

Marshal Stenau lost not a moment. As soon as he observed the Swedes, he rushed upon them with the flower of his cavalry. The violent shock of this body falling upon the Swedes just as they were forming, threw them into confusion. They gave way, were broken, and pursued even into the river. The King of Sweden rallied them in a moment, in the midst of the water, with as much composure as if he had been making a review; then the Swedes, marching more compactly than before, repulsed Marshal Stenau, and advanced into the plain. Stenau, finding his troops were beginning to waver, acted like an able general. He made them retire into a dry place flanked with a morass and a wood, where his artillery lay. The advantage of the ground, and the time which the Saxons had thus obtained for recovering from their first surprise, re-

stored to them their former courage. Charles immediately began the attack. He had fifteen thousand men: Stenau and the Duke of Courland about twelve thousand, with no other artillery than one dismounted cannon. The battle was obstinate and bloody. The duke had two horses killed under him: he penetrated thrice into the heart of the king's guards; but at length being unhorsed by a blow with the butt-end of a musket, his army was thrown into confusion, and no longer disputed the victory. His cuirassiers carried him off with great difficulty, all bruised, and half-dead, from the thickest of the fight, and from under the horses' heels which trampled on him.

Immediately after this victory, the King of Sweden advanced to Mitau, the capital of Courland. All the towns of the duchy surrendered to him at discretion: it was rather a journey than a conquest. From thence he passed without delay into Lithuania, conquering wherever he came; and he felt a pleasing satisfaction, as he himself owned, when he entered triumphantly into the town of Birzen, where the King of Poland and the czar had plotted his destruction but a few months before.

It was in this place that he formed the design of dethroning the King of Poland, by the hands of the Poles themselves. One day when he was at table, full of this enterprise, and observing as usual, the strictest temperance, wrapped in a profound silence, and seeming, as it were, absorbed in the greatness of his conceptions, a German colonel who waited upon him, said with an audible voice, that the meals which the czar and the King of

Poland had made in the same place were somewhat different from those of his majesty. "Yes," says the king, rising, "and I shall the more easily spoil their digestion." In short, by intermixing a little policy with the force of his arms, he resolved to hasten the execution of this mighty project.

Poland, a part of the ancient Sarmatia, is somewhat larger than France but less populous, though it is more so than Sweden. The inhabitants were converted to Christianity only about seven hundred and fifty years ago. It is somewhat surprising, that Latin, the language of the Romans, who never penetrated into that country, is nowadays spoken in common nowhere but in Poland; there every one speaks Latin, even the very servants. This extensive country is very fertile; but the natives are only on that account so much the less industrious. The artists and tradesmen in Poland are Scotch, French, and especially Jews. The last-named have, in this country, nearly three hundred synagogues; and multiplying too fast, and to too great numbers, they will in time be banished from it, as they have already been from Spain. They buy the corn, the cattle, and the commodities of the country at a low rate, dispose of them at Dantzic, and in Germany, and sell to the nobles, at a high price, and thereby gratify the only species of luxury which they know and love. Thus Poland, watered with the finest rivers in the world, rich in pastures, and in mines of salt, and covered with luxuriant crops, remains poor in spite of its plenty, because the people are slaves, and the nobles are proud and indolent.

The constitution of Poland is the most perfect

model of the ancient government of the Goths and Celtæ, which has been corrected or altered everywhere else. It is the only state that has preserved the name of republic together with the royal dignity.

Every gentleman has a right to give his vote in the election of a king, and may even be elected himself. This inestimable privilege is attended with inconveniences proportionately great. The throne is almost always exposed to sale; and as a Polander is seldom able to make the purchase, it has frequently been sold to strangers. The nobility and clergy defend their liberties against the king, and deprive the rest of the nation of theirs. The body of the people are slaves. Such is the unhappy fate of mankind that in every country the greater number are, one way or other, enslaved by the lesser. There the peasant sows not for himself but for his lord to whom his person, his lands, and even the labor of his hands belong, and who can sell him, or cut his throat with the same impunity as he kills the beasts in the field. Every gentleman is independent. He cannot be tried in a criminal cause but by an assembly of the whole nation; he cannot be arrested before he is condemned; so that he is hardly ever punished. There are great numbers of poor among the Poles. These engage in the service of the more wealthy, receive wages from them, and perform the meanest offices. They rather choose to serve their equals, than to enrich themselves by commerce; and while they are dressing their masters' horses, they give themselves the title of electors of kings and destroyers of tyrants.

To see a king of Poland in the pomp of royal majesty, one would take him to be the most absolute prince in Europe; and yet he is the least so. The Poles really make with him that contract which in other nations is only supposed to be made between the king and the subjects. The King of Poland, even at his consecration, and in swearing to the *pacta conventa,* absolves his subjects from the oath of allegiance, should he ever violate the laws of the republic.

He nominates to all offices, and confers all honors. Nothing is hereditary in Poland, but the lands and rank of the nobility. The son of a palatine, or of a king, has no claim to the dignity of his father. But there is this great difference betwixt the king and the republic: the former cannot strip any person of an office after he has bestowed it upon him, whereas the latter may deprive him of the crown, if he transgresses the laws of the state.

The nobility, jealous of their liberty, frequently sell their votes, but seldom their affections. They have no sooner elected a king, than they begin to fear his ambition, and to oppose him by their cabals. The grandees whom he has made, and whom he cannot unmake, often become his enemies, instead of remaining his creatures. Those who are attached to the court are hated by the rest of the nobility, which always forms two parties; a division unavoidable, and even necessary in those countries, that must needs have kings, and yet preserve their liberties.

Whatever concerns the nation is regulated in the

assemblies of the States-General, which are called diets. These states are composed of the body of the senate, and of various gentlemen. The senators are the palatines and the bishops: the gentlemen the deputies of the particular diets in each palatinate. In these great assemblies presides the archbishop of Gnesen, primate of Poland, viceroy of the kingdom during an interregnum, and, next to the king, the first person in the state. Besides him there is seldom any other cardinal in Poland; because the Roman purple giving no precedence in the senate a bishop who should be made a cardinal, would be obliged, either to take his rank as senator, or to renounce the substantial rights of the dignity he enjoys in his own country, to support the vain pretensions of a foreign honor.

These diets, by the laws of the kingdom, must be held alternately in Poland and Lithuania. The deputies frequently transact their business sabre in hand, like the ancient Sarmatians, from whom they are sprung, and sometimes too intoxicated with liquor, a vice to which the Sarmatians were utter strangers. Every gentleman deputed to the States-General, enjoys the same right which the tribunes of the people had at Rome, of opposing themselves to the laws of the senate. Any one gentleman, who says, "I protest," stops by that single word, the unanimous resolution of all the rest; and if he quits the place where the diet is held, the assembly is of course dissolved.

To the disorders arising from this law, they apply a remedy still more dangerous. Poland is seldom without two factions. Unanimity in their diets

being thus rendered impossible, each party forms confederacies, in which they decide by a plurality of voices, without any regard to the protestation of the lesser number. These assemblies, condemned by the laws, but authorized by custom, are held in the king's name, though frequently without his consent and even against his interest; in much the same manner as the league in France made use of the name of Henry III. to ruin him; and as the parliament in England, that brought Charles I. to the block, began by prefixing his majesty's name to all the resolutions they took to destroy him. When the public commotions are ended, it belongs to the general diets either to confirm or repeal the acts of these confederacies. A diet can even cancel the acts of a former diet, for the same reason that in absolute monarchies a king can abolish the law of his predecessor, or even those which have been made by himself.

The nobility who make the laws of the republic likewise constitute its strength. They appear on horseback, completely armed, upon great emergencies, and are able to make up a body of a hundred thousand men. This great army, which is called pospolite, moves slowly and is ill-governed. It cannot continue assembled for any length of time, for want of provisions and forage: it has neither discipline, subordination, nor experience; but that love of liberty by which it is animated will always make it formidable.

These nobles may be conquered, or dispersed, or even held in subjection for a time; but they soon shake off the yoke. They compare themselves to

the reeds which the storm may bend to the ground, but which rise again the moment the storm is over. It is for this reason that they have no places of strength: they will have themselves to be the only bulwarks of the republic, nor do they ever suffer their king to build any forts, lest he should employ them less for their defence than their oppression. Their country is entirely open, excepting two or three frontier places; so that if in a war, whether civil or foreign, they resolve to sustain a siege, they are obliged to raise fortifications of earth in a hurry, to repair the old walls that are half-ruined, and to enlarge the ditches that are almost filled up; and the town is commonly taken before the intrenchments are finished.

The pospolite are not always on horseback to defend the country: they never mount but by order of the diets, or, sometimes in imminent dangers, by the simple order of the king.

The usual guard of Poland is an army, which ought to be maintained at the expense of the republic. It is composed of two bodies, under two grand generals. The first body is that of Poland, and should consist of thirty-six thousand men; the second, to the number of twelve thousand, is that of Lithuania. The two grand generals are independent of each other: though nominated by the king, they are accountable for their conduct to the republic alone, and have an unlimited power over their troops. The colonels are absolute masters of their regiments; and it is their business to maintain and pay them as well as they can. But as they are seldom paid themselves, they ravage the coun-

try, and ruin the peasants, to satisfy their own avidity, and that of their soldiers. The Polish lords appear in these armies with more magnificence than they do in the towns; and their tents are more elegant than their houses. The cavalry, which makes up two-thirds of the army, is composed almost entirely of gentlemen; and is remarkable for the beauty of its horses, and the richness of the accoutrements and harness.

The gendarmes especially, whom they distinguish into hussars and *pancernes,* never march without several valets in their retinue, who lead their horses which are furnished with bridles richly ornamented with plates and nails of silver, embroidered saddles, saddle-bows, and gilt stirrups, or stirrups made of massy silver with large housings trailing on the ground, after the manner of the Turks whose magnificence the Poles endeavor to imitate as much as they can.

But if the cavalry is fine and gorgeous, the infantry was at that time proportionably wretched —ill-clothed, and ill-armed, without regimentals, or anything uniform. Such at least was their condition, till towards the year 1710: and yet this infantry, who resemble the wandering Tartars, support hunger, cold, fatigue, and all the hardships of war with surprising resolution.

One may still discern in the Polish soldiers the character of their ancestors, the ancient Sarmatians, the same want of discipline, the same fury in the assault, the same readiness to fly and to return to the charge, and the same cruel disposition to slaughter when they conquer.

The King of Poland flattered himself at first, that in this pressing necessity, these two bodies would support his cause; that the Polish pospolite would take up arms at his orders; and that these forces, joined to the Saxon subjects, and to his Russian allies, would compose an army, before which the small number of the Swedes would not dare to appear. But he found himself, almost in an instant, deprived of these succors by means of the very care which he had taken in order to have them all at once.

Accustomed, in his hereditary dominions, to the exercise of absolute power, he too fondly imagined that he might govern in Poland as he did in Saxony. The beginning of his reign raised malcontents. His first proceedings provoked the party that had opposed his election, and alienated almost all the rest of the nation. The Poles murmured to see the towns filled with Saxon garrisons, and their frontiers lined with Saxon troops. This nation, more anxious to preserve its liberty, than to attack its neighbors, considered the war with Sweden, and the irruption into Livonia, as enterprises by no means advantageous to the republic. It is very difficult to hinder a free people from seeing their true interest. The Poles were sensible that if this war, undertaken without their consent, should prove unsuccessful, their country, open on all sides, would become a prey to the King of Sweden; and that should it be crowned with success, they would be enslaved by their own king, who being master of Livonia, as well as of Saxony, would shut up Poland between these two states. In

this alternative, either of becoming slaves to the king whom they had elected, or of being pillaged by Charles XII. who was justly incensed, they raised a clamor against the war, which they believed to be declared rather against themselves than against Sweden. They considered the Saxons and the Muscovites as the forgers of their chains; and observing soon after that the King of Sweden had overcome everything that opposed his progress, and was advancing with a victorious army into the heart of Lithuania, they loudly exclaimed against their sovereign, and with so much the greater freedom as he was unfortunate.

Lithuania was at that time divided into two parties, that of the princes of Sapieha, and that of Oginski. The animosity between these two factions, occasioned at first by private quarrels, had at last been inflamed into a civil war. The King of Sweden engaged the princes of Sapieha in his interest; and Oginski being poorly supported by the Saxons, found his party almost annihilated. The Lithuanian army, reduced by these troubles and the want of money, to an inconsiderable number, was partly dispersed by the conquerors. The few that still held out for the King of Poland were separated into small bodies of fugitive troops, who wandered up and down the country, and subsisted by spoil. Augustus beheld nothing in Lithuania but the weakness of his own party, the hatred of his subjects, and a hostile army conducted by a young king, incensed, victorious, and implacable.

There was indeed an army in Poland; but instead of six and thirty thousand men, the number pre-

scribed by the law, it did not amount to eighteen thousand; and it was not only ill-paid and ill-armed, but the generals were as yet undetermined what course to take.

The only resource of the king was, to order the nobility to follow him; but he durst not expose himself to the mortification of a refusal which, by discovering his weakness too plainly, would of consequence have increased it.

In this state of trouble and uncertainty, all the palatinates of the kingdom desired the king to call a diet; in the same manner as in England, during times of danger, all the bodies of the state present addresses to the sovereign, entreating him to convoke a parliament. Augustus had more need of an army than a diet in which the actions of kings are severely canvassed. However, that he might not incense the nation beyond a possibility of reconciliation, he found it necessary to assemble a diet; which was accordingly appointed to be held at Warsaw, on the second of December, 1701. He soon perceived that Charles XII. had, at least, as much power in this assembly as himself. Those who favored the Sapieha, the Lubomirski and their friends, the palatine Leczinski, treasurer of the crown, and especially the partisans of the princes Sobieski, were all of them secretly attached to the King of Sweden.

The most considerable of these partisans, and the most dangerous to the King of Poland, was Cardinal Radjousky, Archbishop of Gnesen, primate of the kingdom, and president of the diet. He was a man full of artifice and cunning, and en-

tirely under the influence of an ambitious woman, who was called by the Swedes, Madam Cardinaless, and who was egging him on to intrigue and faction. King John Sobieski, the predecessor of Augustus, had first made him bishop of Warmia and vice-chancellor of the kingdom. Radjousky, when no more than a bishop, had obtained the cardinal's hat by the favor of the same prince. This dignity soon opened his way to the primacy; and thus by uniting in his own person whatever favorably impresses men, he was able to undertake the most arduous enterprises, without incurring the least danger.

After the death of John, he employed all his interest to raise Prince James Sobieski to the throne; but the torrent of public hatred ran so strong against the father, notwithstanding the eminent qualities of which he was possessed, that it entirely excluded the son from that dignity. After this, the cardinal-primate joined his endeavors with those of the Abbé de Polignac, the French ambassador, to procure the crown for the Prince of Conti, who was actually elected. But the money and troops of Saxony defeated all his negotiations. At last he suffered himself to be drawn over to the party that crowned the Elector of Saxony, and patiently waited for an opportunity of sowing dissension between the new king and the nation.

The victories of Charles XII. the protector of Prince James Sobieski, the civil war in Lithuania, the general alienation of men's minds from King Augustus; all these circumstances made the cardinal-primate believe that the time had now come

when he might safely send back Augustus into Saxony, and open for King John's son the way to the throne. This prince, formerly the innocent object of the hatred of the Poles, had now become their darling, ever since the time that Augustus had lost the public favor; but he durst not as yet entertain the most distant hopes of so great a revolution, of which the cardinal was already laying the foundation.

At first he seemed desirous of effecting a reconciliation between the king and the republic; and despatched circular letters, dictated in appearance by the spirit of charity and concord; a common and well-known snare in which, however, the people are always caught. He wrote an affecting letter to the King of Sweden, conjuring him, in the name of that Saviour whom all Christians adore, to give peace to Poland and her king. Charles XII. answered the intentions of the cardinal rather than his words. Meanwhile he remained with his victorious army in the great duchy of Lithuania, declaring that he would not disturb the Diet; that he made war against Augustus and the Saxons, and not against the Poles; and that, far from attacking, he came only to deliver them from oppression. These letters and these answers were calculated for the public. The emissaries that were continually going and coming between the cardinal and Count Piper, and the secret meetings held at the prelate's house, were the springs that regulated the motions of the Diet. They proposed to despatch an embassy to Charles XII. and unanimously required of the king, that he should bring no more Muscovites upon

their frontiers, and that he should send back his Saxon troops.

The bad fortune of Augustus had already done what the Diet demanded of him. The league secretly concluded with the Muscovites at Birzen, had now become as useless as it had once appeared formidable. He was far from being able to send to the czar the fifty thousand Germans whom he had promised to raise in the empire. The czar himself, a dangerous neighbor to Poland, was in no haste to assist a divided kingdom, from whose misfortunes he hoped to derive some advantage. He contented himself with sending twenty thousand Muscovites into Lithuania, who did more mischief than the Swedes, flying everywhere before the conqueror, and ravaging the lands of the Poles; till at last being pursued by the Swedish generals, and finding no more to pillage, they returned in shoals to their own country. With regard to the shattered remains of the Saxon army that was beaten at Riga, Augustus sent them to winter and recruit in Saxony; hoping by this sacrifice, involuntary as it was, to regain the affection of the Poles who were so highly incensed against him.

The war now was turned into intrigues. The Diet was split into almost as many factions as there were palatines. One day the interests of King Augustus prevailed; the next day they were disregarded. Every one called out for liberty and justice; and yet no one knew what was liberty and justice. The time was spent in private cabals and public harangues. The Diet knew neither what they would, nor what they should do. Great com-

panies seldom steer the right course in times of public commotions; because the factious are bold, and the virtuous are commonly diffident. The Diet broke up in a tumultuous manner, on the 17th of February, 1702, after having spent three months in cabals, without coming to any fixed resolution. The senators, consisting of the palatines and bishops, remained at Warsaw. The senate of Poland has the right of making laws provisionally, which the Diets seldom disannul. This body being less numerous and accustomed to business was far less tumultuous and decided with greater despatch.

They decreed that the embassy, which was proposed in the Diet, should be sent to the King of Sweden; and that the pospolite should take to arms and hold themselves in readiness at all events. They made several regulations for quelling the commotions in Lithuania and diminishing the authority of the king, though it was less to be dreaded than that of Charles XII.

Augustus rather chose to receive hard laws from his conqueror than from his subjects. He resolved to sue for peace with the King of Sweden, and to conclude a secret treaty with that monarch. This was a step which he was obliged to conceal from the senate whom he considered as an enemy still more untractable than Charles. As the affair was of a very delicate nature, he intrusted it to the Countess of Königsmarck, a Swedish lady of high birth, to whom he was at that time attached. This is the lady whose brother became so famous by his unfortunate death, and whose son commanded the French armies with so much glory and success.

Celebrated as she was for her wit and beauty, she was more capable than any minister, of bringing a negotiation to a happy termination. Moreover, as she had an estate in the dominions of Charles XII. and had resided a long time at his court, she had a very plausible pretext for waiting upon him. Accordingly she repaired to the Swedish camp in Lithuania, and immediately applied to Count Piper who too rashly promised her an audience of his master. The countess, among those perfections which rendered her the most amiable woman in Europe, possessed the happy talent of speaking the languages of several countries she had never seen, with as much ease and propriety as if she had been a native. She even amused herself sometimes in writing French verses which one might have easily mistaken for the production of a person born at Versailles. Those which she composed on Charles XII. are not beneath the dignity of history to mention. She introduced the heathen gods praising him for his different virtues. The piece concluded thus:

Enfin, chacun des Dieux, discourant à sa gloire,
Le plaçait par avance au Temple de Mémoire;
Mais Vénus ni Bacchus n'en dirent pas un mot.

The hero's acts while other gods proclaim,
And praise, and promise him immortal fame;
Silent sit Bacchus and the queen of love.

All her wit and charms were lost upon such a man as the King of Sweden, who constantly refused to see her. She therefore resolved to throw herself in his way as he rode out to take the air,

which he frequently did. In this attempt she at last succeeded. She met him one day in a very narrow path; and the moment she observed him, alighted from her coach. The king made her a low bow, without speaking a word to her, turned about his horse, and rode back in an instant. And thus the only advantage which the Countess of Königsmarck gained from her journey was the pleasure of seeing that the King of Sweden feared nobody but her.

The King of Poland was therefore obliged to throw himself into the arms of the senate. He made them two proposals which were laid before them by the palatine of Marienburg; the one, that they should leave to him the disposal of the republic, in which case he would engage to pay the soldiers two quarters in advance out of his own revenue; the other, that they should allow him to bring back twelve thousand Saxons into Poland. The cardinal-primate returned him an answer as severe as the King of Sweden's refusal. He told the palatine of Marienburg, in the name of the assembly, that they had resolved to send an embassy to Charles XII. and that he would not advise him to bring back any Saxons.

In this extremity, the king was desirous of preserving at least the appearance of the royal authority. He sent one of his chamberlains to wait upon Charles, and to learn from him where, and in what manner, his Swedish majesty would be pleased to receive the embassy of the king, his master, and of the republic. Unhappily they had forgotten to ask from the Swedes a passport for the chamberlain.

The King of Sweden, instead of giving him an audience, caused him to be thrown into prison, saying that he expected to receive an embassy from the republic, and not from Augustus.

After this, Charles having left garrisons in some towns in Lithuania, advanced beyond Grodno, a city well known in Europe for the Diets that are held there, but ill-built, and worse fortified.

A few miles on the other side of Grodno, he met the embassy of the republic, which consisted of five senators. They desired, in the first place, to have the ceremony of their introduction properly regulated, a thing with which the king was utterly unacquainted. They demanded, that the senate should be complimented with the title of Most Serene, and that the coaches of the king and senators should be sent to meet them. They were told in answer that the republic should be styled Illustrious, and not Most Serene; that the king never used any coaches; that he had plenty of officers in his retinue, but no senators; that a lieutenant-general should be sent to meet them; and that they might come on their own horses.

Charles XII. received them in his tent, with some appearance of military grandeur. Their conversation was full of caution and reserve. They said they were afraid of Charles XII. and did not love Augustus; but that it would be a shame for them to take the crown, in obedience to the orders of a stranger, from the head of that prince whom they had elected. Nothing was finally concluded; and Charles XII. gave them to understand that he would settle all disputes at Warsaw.

His march was preceded by a manifesto which the cardinal and his party spread over Poland in the space of eight days. By this writing, Charles invited all the Poles to join him in avenging their own quarrel, and endeavored to persuade them that his interest and theirs were the same. They were, however, very different; but the manifesto, supported by a powerful army, by the disorder of the senate, and by the approach of the conqueror, made a deep impression on the minds of the people. They were obliged to own Charles for their protector, because he was resolved to be so; and happy was it for them, that he contented himself with this title.

The senators who opposed Augustus published this manifesto aloud, even in the royal presence. The few who adhered to him observed a profound silence. At length, intelligence being brought that Charles was advancing by long marches, every one prepared to depart in a hurry. The cardinal left Warsaw among the first. The greater part fled with precipitation; some retired to their country-seats, there to await the unravelling of this perplexed and intricate affair; others went to arm their friends. Nobody remained with the king but the ambassadors of the emperor and the czar, the pope's nuncio, and a few bishops and palatines who were attached to his fortunes. He was forced to fly, though nothing as yet decided in his favor. Before his departure, he hastened to hold a council with the small body of senators who still represented the senate. Zealous as these were for his interest, they were nevertheless Poles; they had all conceived such an utter aversion to the Saxon troops, that

they durst not grant him the liberty of recalling more than six thousand of them for his defence; and they even voted that these six thousand should be commanded by the Grand-General of Poland, and be sent back immediately upon the conclusion of a peace. The armies of the republic they left entirely at his disposal.

After the decree of the senate, the king left Warsaw, too weak to resist his enemies, and but little satisfied even with the conduct of his friends. He immediately published orders for assembling the pospolite and the two armies, which were little more than empty names. He had nothing to hope for in Lithuania of which the Swedes were in possession. The army of Poland, reduced to a handful of men, was in want of arms and provisions, and had no great inclination to the war. Most of the nobility, intimidated, irresolute, and disaffected, remained at their country-seats. In vain did the king, authorized by the laws of the land, command every gentleman, under pain of death, to take up arms and follow him. It had even become a problematical point whether or not they ought to obey him. His chief dependence was upon the troops of the electorate, where the form of government being wholly despotic, he was under no apprehension of being disobeyed. He had already given secret orders for the march of twelve thousand Saxons who were advancing with great expedition. He likewise recalled the eight thousand men whom he had promised to the emperor in his war against France, and whom the necessity of his affairs now obliged him to withdraw. To introduce so many Saxons

into Poland was, in effect, to alienate the affection of all of his subjects, and to violate the law made by his own party, which allowed only of six thousand. But he well knew, that, if he proved victorious, they would not dare to complain, and if he should be conquered, they would never forgive him for having introduced even the six thousand. While the soldiers were arriving in troops, and while he was flying from one palatinate to another assembling the nobility who adhered to him, the King of Sweden reached Warsaw, on the 5th of May, 1702. The gates were opened to him at the first summons. He dismissed the Polish garrison, disbanded the city-guard, posted guards of his own in all the convenient places, and ordered the inhabitants to deliver up their arms. Satisfied with having disarmed them, and unwilling to provoke them by any unnecessary severities, he demanded a contribution of no more than one hundred thousand livres. Augustus was then assembling his forces at Cracow, and was greatly surprised to see the cardinal-primate arrive among the rest. This man affected to maintain the decorum of his character to the last, and to dethrone his king with all the appearance of the most respectful behavior. He gave him to understand that the King of Sweden seemed very well inclined to come to a reasonable accommodation, and humbly begged leave to wait upon that monarch. Augustus granted him what he could not refuse, that is, the liberty of hurting himself.

The cardinal-primate immediately repaired to the King of Sweden, before whom he had not as yet

ventured to appear. He saw him at Praga, not far from Warsaw, but without any of those ceremonies which had been observed in introducing the ambassadors of the republic. He found the conqueror clad in a coat of coarse blue cloth, with brass buttons, jack-boots, and buckskin gloves that reached up to his elbows. He was in a room without hangings, attended by the Duke of Holstein, Count Piper his first minister, and several general officers. The king advanced a few steps to meet the cardinal; they talked together standing, for about a quarter of an hour; Charles put an end to the conference, by saying aloud: "I will never give the Poles peace, till they have elected a new king." The cardinal, who expected such a declaration, caused it to be immediately notified to all the palatinates, assuring them that he was extremely sorry for it, but represented to them, at the same time, the absolute necessity of complying with the conqueror's request.

Upon receiving this intelligence, the King of Poland plainly perceived that he must either lose his crown, or preserve it by a battle; and he exerted his utmost efforts in order to succeed in the decision of this important quarrel. All his Saxon troops had arrived from the frontiers of Saxony. The nobility of the palatinate of Cracow, where he still remained, came in a body to offer him their services. He exhorted them to remember the oaths they had taken; and they promised to shed the last drop of their blood in support of his cause. Strengthened by these succors, and by the troops which bore the name of the army of the crown, he went, for the first time, in quest of the King of Sweden; nor was

he long in finding him for that prince was already advancing towards Cracow.

The two kings met on the 13th of July, 1702, in a spacious plain near Klissow, between Warsaw and Cracow. Augustus had nearly four and twenty thousand men; Charles XII. had not above twelve thousand. The battle began by a general discharge of the artillery. At the first volley of the Saxons, the Duke of Holstein who commanded the Swedish cavalry, a young prince of great courage and virtue, received a cannon-ball in the loins. The king asked if he was killed, and was answered in the affirmative. He made no reply: a few tears fell from his eyes: he covered his face with his hands for a moment; and then, of a sudden, spurring on his horse with all his might, he rushed into the thickest of the enemy at the head of the guards.

The King of Poland did everything that could be expected from a prince who fought for his crown. Thrice in person did he rally his troops, and lead them up to the charge; but the Saxons only could be said to fight for him: the Poles who formed his right wing, fled to a man, at the very beginning of the battle; some through fear, and others through disaffection. The good fortune of Charles XII. carried all before it; he gained a complete victory. He took possession of the enemy's camp, their colors and artillery; and Augustus's military-chest fell into his hands. He halted not a moment on the field of battle, but marched directly to Cracow, pursuing the King of Poland who fled before him.

The citizens of Cracow were bold enough to shut

the gates upon the conqueror. He caused them to be burst open. The garrison did not venture to fire a single gun; but were driven with whips and canes into the castle, into which the king entered pell-mell with them. Charles observing an officer of the artillery going to fire a cannon, ran up to him and snatched the match out of his hand. The commander fell on his knees before him. Three Swedish regiments were lodged at free quarters among the citizens, and the town was taxed with a contribution of a hundred thousand rix-dollars. The Count de Stenbock, who was appointed governor of the city, being informed that some treasures were hidden in the tombs of the Polish kings, in St. Nicholas church at Cracow, caused them to be opened. Nothing was found there but some ornaments of gold and silver, belonging to the churches. Of these he took a part; and Charles XII. even sent a golden cup to one of the Swedish churches; an action that might have raised the Polish Catholics against him, had anything been able to withstand the terror of his arms.

He left Cracow with a determined resolution to pursue Augustus without intermission. At the distance of a few miles from the city, by a fall from his horse he broke his thigh. They were obliged to carry him back to Cracow where he remained confined to his bed for six weeks, in the hands of the surgeons. This accident gave Augustus a little respite. He forthwith caused it to be spread about through Poland and Germany, that Charles XII. was killed by the fall. This report, which gained credit for some time, filled the minds of all men with

doubt and apprehension. During this interval, he assembled at Marienburg, and then at Lublin, all the orders of the kingdom, which had been convoked already at Sandomierz. The assembly was very full, as few palatinates refused to send their deputies thither. He regained the affections of most of them by presents and promises, and by that affability without which absolute kings cannot be beloved, nor elective kings maintain themselves on the throne. The Diet were soon undeceived concerning the false report of the King of Sweden's death; but that large body was already put in motion, and suffered itself to be carried along by the impulse it had received; all the members swore to continue faithful to their sovereign: so subject to change are all great companies! Even the cardinal-primate himself, who still pretended a regard for Augustus, repaired to the Diet of Lublin where he kissed the king's hand, and readily took the oath, as well as the other members. The substance of the oath was, that they had never attempted, nor ever would attempt, anything prejudicial to the interest of Augustus. The king excused the cardinal from the first part of the oath, and the prelate blushed while he swore to the last. The result of all the deliberations of this Diet was that the Republic of Poland should maintain an army of fifty thousand men at their own expense, for the service of their sovereign; that they should allow the Swedes six weeks' time to declare whether they were for peace or war; and the same time to the princes of Sapieha, the original authors of the troubles in Lithuania, to come and ask pardon from the King of Poland.

In the meantime Charles XII. being cured of his wound, overturned all their deliberations. Unalterably fixed in his resolution of forcing the Poles to dethrone their king with their own hands, he caused, by the intrigues of the cardinal, a new assembly to be convoked at Warsaw, in opposition to that of Lublin. His generals represented to him that this negotiation might possibly be involved in endless delays, and by that means be rendered ineffectual; that, in the meantime, the Muscovites were every day becoming a more equal match for the troops which he had left in Livonia and Ingria; that the skirmishes which frequently happened between the Swedes and Russians in these provinces did not always turn out to the advantage of the former; and, finally, that his own presence might soon be necessary in those quarters. Charles, as steady in the prosecution of his schemes, as he was brisk and vigorous in action, replied: "Should it oblige me to remain here for fifty years, I will not depart till I have dethroned the King of Poland."

He left the assembly of Warsaw to combat that of Lublin by their speeches and writings, and to justify their proceedings by the laws of the kingdom; laws always equivocal, which each party interpret according to their pleasure, and which success alone can render incontestable. As for himself, having reinforced his victorious troops with six thousand horse and eight thousand foot, which he had received from Sweden, he marched against the remains of the Saxon army, which he had beaten at Klissow, and which had found time to rally and recruit, while his fall from his horse had confined

him to his bed. This army shunned his approach, and retired towards Prussia, to the north-west of Warsaw. The river Bug lay between him and the enemy. Charles swam across it at the head of his cavalry: the infantry went to look for a ford somewhat farther on. He came up with the Saxons on the first of May, 1703, at a place called Pultusk. General Stenau commanded them to the number of about ten thousand. The King of Sweden, in his precipitous march, had brought no more than the same number along with him, confident that a less number would be sufficient. So great was the terror of his arms, that one-half of the Saxon troops fled at his approach, without waiting for the battle. General Stenau, with two regiments, kept his ground for a moment; but he was soon hurried along in the general flight of his army which was dispersed before it was vanquished. The Swedes did not take above a thousand prisoners, nor kill above six hundred men, having more difficulty in pursuing than in defeating the enemy.

Augustus having now nothing left him but the shattered remains of his Saxons who were everywhere defeated, retired in haste to Thorn, an ancient city of Royal Prussia, situated on the Vistula, and under the protection of the Poles. Charles immediately prepared to besiege it. The King of Poland, not thinking himself secure in this place, withdrew from it and flew into every corner of Poland where he could possibly find any soldiers, and into which the Swedes had not as yet penetrated. Meanwhile Charles, amidst so many rapid marches, swimming across rivers, and hurried along with his in-

fantry mounted behind his cavalry, had not been able to bring up his cannon to Thorn; he was therefore obliged to wait till a train of artillery could be brought from Sweden by sea.

While he tarried here, he fixed his quarters at the distance of a few miles from the city, in reconnoitring which he frequently approached too near the ramparts. In these dangerous excursions, the plain dress which he wore was of greater service to him than he imagined, as it prevented his being distinguished and marked out by the enemy who would not have failed to fire upon him. One day, having advanced too near the fortifications, attended by one of his generals called Lieven who was dressed in a blue coat* trimmed with gold, and fearing lest the general should be too easily distinguished, he ordered him to walk behind him. To this he was prompted by that greatness of soul which was so natural to him that it even prevented his reflecting on the imminent danger to which he exposed his own life, in order to preserve that of his subject. Lieven perceiving his error too late, in having put on a remarkable dress which endangered all those who were near him, and being equally concerned for the king wherever he was, hesitated for a moment whether or not he should obey him. In the midst of this contest, the king takes him by the arm, puts himself before him, and screens him with his body. At that instant, a cannon-ball taking them in flank, struck the general

* In the former editions we gave this officer a scarlet coat; but the chaplain Norberg has so incontestably proved it to have been a blue one, that we have thought proper to correct the error.

dead upon the very spot which the king had hardly quitted. The death of this man, killed exactly in his stead, and because he had endeavored to save him, contributed not a little to confirm him in the opinion, which he always entertained, of absolute predestination; and made him believe that his fate which had preserved him in such a singular manner, reserved him for the execution of greater undertakings.

Everything succeeded with him: his negotiations and his arms were equally fortunate. He was present, as it were, in every part of Poland. His Grand-General, Renschild, was in the heart of the kingdom with a large body of troops. About thirty thousand Swedes, under different generals, were posted towards the north and east upon the frontiers of Muscovy, and withstood the united efforts of the whole Russian Empire; and Charles was in the west, at the other end of Poland, with the flower of his army.

The King of Denmark, tied up by the treaty of Travendal which his weakness had hindered him from breaking, remained quiet. That prudent monarch did not venture to discover the disgust he felt at seeing the King of Sweden so near his dominions. At a greater distance towards the southwest, between the rivers Elbe and Weser, lay the Duchy of Bremen, the most remote of all the ancient conquests of the Swedes. This country was filled with strong garrisons, and opened to the conqueror a free passage into Saxony and the empire. Thus, from the German Ocean almost to the mouth of the Boristhenes, comprehending the whole breadth of

Europe, and even to the gates of Moscow, all was in consternation; and every one was daily expecting a general revolution. Charles's ships which were now masters of the Baltic, were employed in transporting to Sweden the prisoners he had taken in Poland. Sweden, undisturbed in the midst of these mighty commotions, enjoyed the sweets of peace and shared in the glory of its king, without bearing the burden of the war; inasmuch as its victorious troops were paid and maintained at the expense of the conquered.

While all the northern powers were thus kept in awe by the arms of Charles XII. the town of Dantzic ventured to incur his displeasure. Fourteen frigates and forty transports were bringing the king a reinforcement of six thousand men, with cannon and ammunition, to begin the siege of Thorn. These succors were obliged to pass up the Vistula. At the mouth of this river stands Dantzic, a free and wealthy town which, together with Thorn and Elbing, enjoys the same privileges in Poland as the imperial towns possess in Germany. Its liberty has been alternately attacked by the Danes, the Swedes, and some German princes; and nothing has preserved it from bondage but the mutual jealousy of these rival powers. Count Stenbock, one of the Swedish generals, assembled the magistrates in the king's name, and demanded a passage for the troops and ammunition. The magistrates were guilty of a piece of imprudence very common with those who treat with people more powerful than themselves; they durst neither refuse nor grant his demands. General Stenbock obliged them to grant

more than he had at first demanded. He exacted from the city a contribution of a hundred thousand crowns, as a punishment for their imprudent refusal. At last the recruits, the cannon, and ammunition, being arrived before Thorn, the siege was begun on the 22d of September.

Robel, governor of the place, defended it for a month with a garrison of five thousand men. At the expiration of that term he was obliged to surrender, at discretion. The garrison were made prisoners of war, and transported to Sweden. Robel was presented to the king unarmed. That prince, who never lost an opportunity of honoring merit in his enemies, gave him a sword with his own hand, made him a handsome present in money, and dismissed him on his parole. But the poor and paltry town was condemned to pay forty thousand crowns, an excessive contribution for such a place.

Elbing, built on an arm of the Vistula, founded by the Teutonic knights, and annexed likewise to Poland, did not profit by the misconduct of the Dantzickers, but hesitated too long about granting a passage to the Swedish troops. It was punished more severely than Dantzic. On the 13th of December Charles entered it at the head of four thousand men, with bayonets fixed to the ends of their muskets. The inhabitants, struck with terror, fell upon their knees in the streets, and begged for mercy. He caused them all to be disarmed; quartered his soldiers upon them; and then having assembled the magistrates, exacted that same day a contribution of two hundred and fifty thousand crowns. There were in the town two hundred pieces

of cannon and four hundred thousand weight of powder, which he likewise seized. A battle gained would not have procured him so many advantages. All these successes paved the way for the dethroning of Augustus.

Hardly had the cardinal taken an oath that he would make no attempts against his sovereign, when he repaired to the assembly of Warsaw, always under the specious pretence of peace. When he arrived there he talked of nothing but obedience and concord, though he was accompanied by a number of soldiers whom he had raised on his own estate. At last he threw off the mask; and, on the 14th of February, 1704, declared, in the name of the assembly, that Augustus, Elector of Saxony, was incapable of wearing the crown of Poland. All the members with one voice pronounced the throne to be vacant. It was the intention of the King of Sweden, and consequently of the Diet, to raise Prince James Sobieski to the throne of King John his father. James Sobieski was then at Breslau in Silesia, waiting with impatience for the crown which his father had worn. While he was one day hunting a few leagues from Breslau, in company with Prince Constantine, one of his brothers, thirty Saxon horsemen sent privately by King Augustus, issued suddenly from a neighboring wood, surrounded the two princes, and carried them off without resistance. They had prepared fresh horses, upon which they conducted them to Leipsic, and committed them to close custody. This stroke disconcerted the measures of Charles, the cardinal, and the assembly of Warsaw.

Fortune, which amuses herself with crowned

heads, exposed Augustus, almost at the same time, to the danger of being taken himself. He was at table, three leagues from Cracow, relying upon an advanced guard which was posted at some distance, when, all of a sudden, General Renschild appeared, after having surprised the guard. The King of Poland had but just time to get on horseback, with ten others. General Renschild pursued him for four days, just upon the point of seizing him every moment. The king fled to Sandomierz: the Swedish general pursued him thither; and it was only by a piece of good fortune that he made his escape.

Meanwhile the king's party and that of the cardinal treated each other as traitors to their country. The army of the crown was divided between the two factions. Augustus, being at last obliged to accept assistance from the Russians, was sorry that he had not applied to them sooner. At one time he flew into Saxony, where his resources were exhausted; at another he returned to Poland, where no one durst serve him; while in the meantime the King of Sweden, victorious and unmolested, ruled in Poland with uncontrolled authority.

Count Piper, who was as great a politician as his master was a hero, advised Charles XII. to take the crown of Poland to himself. He represented how easy it would be to accomplish such a scheme with a victorious army, and a powerful party in the heart of the kingdom which was already subdued. He tempted him with the title of "Defender of the Evangelic Religion;" a name which flattered the ambition of Charles. It would be easy, he said, to effect in Poland what Gustavus Vasa had effected in Sweden; to establish the Lutheran religion, and

to break the chains of the people who were now held in slavery by the nobility and clergy. Charles yielded to the temptation for a moment, but glory was his idol. To it he sacrificed his own interest, and the pleasure he would have enjoyed in taking Poland from the pope. He told Count Piper, that he was much happier in bestowing than in gaining kingdoms; and added with a smile, "You were made to be the minister of an Italian prince."

Charles was still near Thorn, in that part of Royal Prussia which belongs to Poland. From thence he extended his views to what was passing at Warsaw, and kept all the neighboring powers in awe. Prince Alexander, brother of the two Sobieskis who were carried into Silesia, came to implore his aid in avenging his wrongs. Charles granted his desire the more readily, as he thought he could easily gratify it and, at the same time, avenge himself. But being extremely desirous of giving Poland a king, he advised Prince Alexander to mount the throne, from which fortune seemed determined to exclude his brother. Little did he expect a refusal. Prince Alexander told him that nothing should ever induce him to make an advantage of his elder brother's misfortune. The King of Sweden, Count Piper, all his friends, and especially the young palatine of Posnania, Stanislaus Leczinski, pressed him to accept the crown; but he remained unmoved by all their importunities. The neighboring princes were astonished to hear of this uncommon refusal; and knew not which to admire most: a king of Sweden, who, at twenty-two years of age, gave away the crown of Poland, or Prince Alexander, who refused to accept it.

CHAPTER III.

Stanislaus Leczinski elected King of Poland. Death of the Cardinal-primate. Skilful retreat of General Schulenburg. Exploits of the Czar. Foundation of St. Petersburg. Battle of Fraustadt. Charles enters Saxony. Peace of Altranstädt. Augustus abdicates the crown in favor of Stanislaus. General Patkul, the czar's plenipotentiary, is broken upon the wheel and quartered. Charles receives the ambassadors of foreign princes in Saxony, and goes to Dresden to visit Augustus before his departure.

YOUNG Stanislaus Leczinski was then deputed by the assembly of Warsaw to go to the King of Sweden and give him an account of several differences which had arisen among them since the time that Prince James was carried off. Stanislaus had a very engaging aspect, full of courage and sweetness, with an air of probity and frankness which, of all external advantages, is certainly the greatest, and gives more weight to words than even eloquence itself. Charles was surprised to hear him talk with so much judgment of Augustus, the assembly, the cardinal-primate, and the different interests that divided Europe. King Stanislaus did me the honor to inform me that he said to the King of Sweden in Latin: "How can we elect a king, if the two princes, James and Constantine Sobieski, are held in captivity?" and that Charles replied: "How can we deliver the republic if we don't elect a king?" This conversation was the only intrigue that placed Stan-

islaus on the throne. Charles prolonged the conversation on purpose that he might the better sound the genius of the young deputy. After the audience, he said aloud that he had not seen a man so fit to reconcile all parties. He immediately made inquiry into the character of the palatine Leczinski, and found that he was a man of great courage and inured to labor; that he always lay on a kind of straw mattress, requiring no service from his domestics; that he was temperate to a degree rarely known in that climate; liberal with economy; adored by his vassals; and perhaps the only lord in Poland who had any friends, at a time when men acknowledged no ties but those of interest and faction. This character, which in many particulars resembled his own, determined him entirely. After the conference he said aloud: "There is the man that shall always be my friend." The meaning of which words was soon perceived to be: "There is the man that shall be king."

As soon as the primate of Poland understood that Charles XII. had nominated the palatine Leczinski, in much the same manner as Alexander nominated Abdalonymus, he hastened to the King of Sweden to try if possible to divert him from his resolution; being desirous that the crown should devolve on one Lubomirski. "But what have you to object against Stanislaus Leczinski?" said the conqueror. "Sir," said the primate, "he is too young." "He is much about my age," replied the king dryly; and turning his back upon the prelate, immediately despatched the Count de Horn, to acquaint the assembly of Warsaw, that they must

choose a king in five days, and that Stanislaus Leczinski must be the man. The Count de Horn arrived on the 7th of July, and fixed the 12th for the day of election, with as much ease and indifference as if he had been ordering the decampment of a battalion. The cardinal-primate, disappointed in the fruit of so many intrigues, returned to the assembly where he left no stone unturned to defeat an election in which he had no share. But the King of Sweden having come incognito to Warsaw, he was obliged to hold his peace. All that the primate could do was to absent himself from the election: unable to oppose the conqueror, and unwilling to assist him, he confined himself to a useless neutrality.

Saturday the 12th of July, the day fixed for the election, having arrived, the assembly met at three in the afternoon at Colo, the place appointed for the ceremony; the Bishop of Posnania acting as president, in the room of the cardinal-primate. He came attended by several gentlemen of the party. The Count de Horn and two other general officers assisted publicly at the solemnity, as ambassadors-extraordinary from Charles to the republic. The session lasted till nine in the evening; and the Bishop of Posnania put an end to it by declaring, in the name of the assembly, that Stanislaus was elected King of Poland. They all threw their hats into the air, and the shouts of acclamation drowned the cries of the opposers. It was of no service to the cardinal-primate, or to the others who had resolved to continue neutral that they had absented themselves from the election; they were all obliged next

day to come and do homage to the new king; but the greatest mortification to which they were subjected was their being compelled to follow him to the King of Sweden's quarters. Charles paid the sovereign he had made all the honors due to a King of Poland; and, to add the greater weight to his new dignity, he furnished him with a considerable sum of money, and a sufficient number of troops.

Immediately after this, Charles XII. departed from Warsaw, in order to finish the conquest of Poland. He had ordered his army to rendezvous before Leopold, the capital of the great palatinate of Russia, a place important in itself, and still more so on account of the riches which it contained. It was supposed it would hold out for fifteen days, by means of the fortifications with which Augustus had strengthened it. The conqueror sat down before it on the 5th of September, and next day took it by assault. All those who presumed to make resistance were put to the sword. The victorious troops, though masters of the city, did not break their ranks to go pillaging, notwithstanding the immense treasures that were said to be concealed in Leopold. They drew up in order of battle in the great square; where the remaining part of the garrison came and surrendered themselves prisoners of war. The king published his orders by sound of trumpet, commanding, under pain of death, all the inhabitants, who had any effects belonging to Augustus or his adherents, to produce them before night. The measures he took were so wisely concerted, that few ventured to disobey; and accordingly four hundred chests of gold and silver coin,

of plate and other valuable effects, were brought to his majesty.

The beginning of Stanislaus's reign was distinguished by an event of a very different nature. Some business, which absolutely required his presence, had obliged him to remain at Warsaw. He had with him his mother, his wife and his two daughters. The cardinal-primate, the Bishop of Posnania, and some grandees of Poland, composed his new court. It was guarded by six thousand Poles of the army of the crown, who had lately entered into his service, but whose fidelity had not yet been put to the trial. General Horn, governor of the town, had not above fifteen hundred Swedes. The citizens of Warsaw were in a profound tranquillity; and Stanislaus proposed setting out in a few days for the conquest of Leopold; when, all on a sudden, he was informed that a numerous army was approaching the city. This was King Augustus, who, by a fresh effort, and by one of the most dexterous marches that ever general made, had eluded the King of Sweden, and was now coming with twenty thousand men to fall upon Warsaw, and carry off his rival.

Warsaw was unfortified; the Polish troops who defended it were not to be relied on; Augustus held a correspondence with some of the citizens; so that, had Stanislaus remained in it, he must certainly have been ruined. He sent his family back into Posnania, under a guard of Polish troops in whom he could most confide. In this confusion he thought he had lost his second daughter who was about a year old, and who had been carried by her nurse into a neighboring village where she was soon after

found in a manger as Stanislaus himself has since informed me. This is the same child whom fortune, after a variety of the most surprising vicissitudes, at last made queen of France. Several gentlemen took different roads. The new king immediately set out for the camp of Charles XII. learning thus betimes to suffer disgrace, and forced to quit his capital six weeks after he had been advanced to the sovereignty.

Augustus entered the capital like a provoked and victorious sovereign. The inhabitants, already fleeced by the King of Sweden, were entirely ruined by Augustus. The cardinal's palace, and all the houses of the confederate lords, with all their effects both in town and country, were given to plunder. What was most extraordinary in this sudden revolution was that the pope's nuncio who attended Augustus demanded in the name of his master, that the Bishop of Posnania should be delivered into his hands, as subject to the jurisdiction of the court of Rome, both as a bishop and as the favorer of a prince who had been advanced to the throne by the arms of a Lutheran.

The court of Rome, which has always been endeavoring to increase its temporal power by means of the spiritual, had, long before this, established a kind of jurisdiction in Poland, at the head of which was the pope's nuncio. Its ministers never failed to avail themselves of every favorable opportunity to extend their power, which is revered by the multitude, but always contested by men of sense. They claimed a right of judging in all ecclesiastical causes; and in times of trouble had usurped several

other privileges in which they maintained themselves till about the year 1728, when these abuses were corrected—abuses which are never reformed till they become absolutely intolerable.

Augustus, glad of an opportunity of punishing the Bishop of Posnania in a decent manner, and willing to gratify the court of Rome, whose pretensions, however, he would have opposed on any other occasion, delivered the Polish prelate into the hands of the nuncio. The bishop, after having seen his house pillaged, was carried by the soldiers to the lodgings of the Italian minister, and thence sent into Saxony where he ended his days. Count Horn bore the continual fire of the enemy in the castle where he was shut up, till at last the place being no longer tenable, he surrendered himself with his fifteen hundred Swedes. This was the first advantage which Augustus gained amidst the torrent of his bad fortune, over the victorious arms of his enemy.

This last effort was the blaze of a fire that was just going out. His troops, which had been assembled in haste, consisted either of Poles ready to forsake him on the first disgrace, or of Saxon recruits who had never seen a campaign; or of vagabond Cossacks, more fit to distress the conquered than to conquer; and all of them trembled at the bare mention of the King of Sweden's name.

That conqueror, accompanied by Stanislaus, went in quest of his enemy, at the head of his best troops. The Saxon army fled everywhere before him. The towns for thirty miles round sent him the keys of their gates. Not a day passed that was not distin-

guished by some advantage. Success began to grow too familiar to Charles. He said it was rather like hunting than fighting, and complained that he was not obliged to purchase a victory on harder terms.

Augustus gave the command of his army, for some time, to Count Schulenburg, a very able general, and who had need of all his experience at the head of dispirited troops. He was more anxious to preserve his master's troops than to conquer. He acted by stratagem, and the two kings with vigor. He stole some marches upon them, took possession of some advantageous posts, sacrificed a few horse in order to give his infantry time to retire; and thus, by a glorious retreat, saved his troops in the face of an enemy, in contending with whom it was impossible, at that time, to acquire any other kind of glory.

He had scarcely arrived in the palatinate of Posnania, when he learned that the two kings who, he imagined were at the distance of fifty leagues, had marched these fifty leagues in nine hours. He had only eight thousand foot, and a thousand horse; and yet with his handful of men, he was obliged to make head against a superior army, against the name of the King of Sweden, and against that terror with which so many defeats had naturally inspired the Saxons. He had always affirmed, contrary to the opinion of the German generals, that infantry were able to resist cavalry in open field, even without the assistance of chevaux-de-frise, and he this day ventured to put the matter to the test of experience, against a victorious cavalry commanded

by two kings, and by the best Swedish generals. He took possession of such an advantageous post that he could not possibly be surrounded. The soldiers of the first rank, armed with pikes and fusees, bent one knee upon the ground, and standing very close together, presented to the enemy's horse a kind of pointed rampart with pikes and bayonets: the second rank, inclining a little on the shoulders of the first, fired over their heads; and the third, standing upright, fired at the same time from behind the other two. The Swedes, with their usual impetuosity, rushed upon the Saxons who awaited the assault without flinching: the discharge of the muskets, and the points of the pikes and bayonets maddened the horses, and made them rear instead of advancing. By this means the attack of the Swedes was rendered disorderly; and the Saxons defended themselves by keeping their ranks.

Though Schulenburg had received five wounds, he drew up his men in an oblong square, and thus made an orderly retreat about midnight towards the small town of Gerau, three leagues distant from the field of battle. But he had hardly begun to breathe in this place, when the two kings suddenly appeared at his heels.

Beyond Gerau, towards the river Oder, lay a thick wood, by marching through which the Saxon general saved his fatigued infantry. The Swedes who were not to be checked by such a trivial interruption, pursued them even through the wood, advancing with great difficulty through paths hardly passable by foot travellers; and the Saxons had not crossed the wood above five hours before the

Swedish horse. On the other side of the wood runs the river Parts hard by a village called Rutsen. Schulenburg had taken care to send orders for having the boats in readiness; and he now transported his troops which were diminished by one-half. Charles arrived the very moment that Schulenburg reached the opposite bank. Never conqueror pursued his enemy with greater celerity. The reputation of Schulenburg depended upon his escaping from the King of Sweden: the king, on the other hand, thought his glory depended on taking Schulenburg, and the remains of his army. He lost not a moment, but immediately caused his cavalry to cross at a ford. And thus the Saxons found themselves shut up between the river Parts, and the greater river Oder, which takes its rise in Silesia, and at this place is very deep and rapid.

Though the destruction of Schulenburg seemed to be inevitable, yet with the loss of a few soldiers he passed the Oder in the night. Thus he saved his army, and Charles could not help saying: "Schulenburg has conquered us to-day."

This is the same Schulenburg, who was afterwards general of the Venetians, and to whom the republic erected a statue in Corfu, for having defended that bulwark of Italy against the Turks. Such honors are conferred by republics only: kings give nothing but rewards.

But what contributed so much to the glory of Schulenburg was of no service to King Augustus who once more abandoned Poland to his enemies; retired into Saxony, and instantly repaired the fortifications of Dresden, being already afraid, and not

without reason, for the capital of his hereditary dominions.

Charles XII. now beheld Poland reduced to subjection. His generals, after his example, had beaten in Courland several small bodies of the Muscovites who ever since the battle of Narva had appeared only in small companies, and made war in those parts like the vagrant Tartars, who pillage, fly, and then reappear in order to fly again.

Wherever the Swedes came, they thought themselves sure of victory, when they were only twenty to a hundred. At this happy conjuncture, Stanislaus prepared for his coronation. Fortune to which he owed his election at his expulsion from Warsaw now recalled him thither, amidst the acclamations of a numerous nobility attached to him by the fate of war. A diet was immediately convoked where all obstacles were removed, except such as were raised by the court of Rome which alone endeavored to traverse the project.

It was natural for Rome to declare in favor of Augustus who from a Protestant had become a Catholic in order to mount the throne of Poland, and to oppose Stanislaus who had been placed upon the same throne by the great enemy of the Catholic religion. Clement XI., then the pope, sent briefs to all the prelates of Poland, and particularly to the cardinal-primate, threatening them with excommunication, if they presumed to assist at the coronation of Stanislaus, or attempted anything against the rights of Augustus.

Should these briefs be delivered to the bishops who were at Warsaw, it was believed that some of

them would be weak enough to obey them; and that the majority would avail themselves of this pretext to become more troublesome in proportion as they were more necessary. Every possible precaution was therefore taken to prevent these letters of the pope from being admitted into Warsaw. But a Franciscan received the briefs secretly, promising to deliver them into the bishops' own hands. He presently gave one to the suffragan of Chelm. This prelate who was strongly attached to Stanislaus, carried it to the king unopened. The king sent for the monk and asked him how he durst undertake to deliver a writing of that nature. The Franciscan answered that he did it by order of his general. Stanislaus desired him for the future to pay a greater regard to the orders of his king than to those of the general of the Franciscans, and forthwith banished him from the city.

The same day a placard was published by the King of Sweden, forbidding, under the most severe penalties, all the ecclesiastics in Warsaw, both secular and regular, to interfere in affairs of state. And for the greater security, he caused guards to be placed at the gates of all the prelates, and forbade any stranger to enter the city. These little severities he took upon himself, in order to prevent any rupture between the clergy and Stanislaus, at his accession to the throne. He said he relaxed himself from the fatigues of war, in giving a check to the intrigues of the Romish court; and that he must fight against it with paper, whereas he was obliged to attack other sovereigns with real arms.

The cardinal-primate was solicited by Charles and

Stanislaus to come and perform the ceremony of the coronation. He did not think himself obliged to leave Dantzic, and to consecrate a king who had been chosen against his will. But as it was his maxim never to do anything without a pretext, he resolved to provide a lawful excuse for his refusal. He caused the pope's brief to be fixed in the night-time to the gate of his own house. The magistrates of Dantzic took fire at this indignity, and caused strict search to be made for the authors, who nevertheless could not be found. The primate pretended to be highly incensed, but in reality was very well pleased, as it furnished him with a reason for refusing to consecrate the new king; and thus at one and the same time he kept fair with Charles XII., Augustus, Stanislaus, and the pope. He died a few days after, leaving his country involved in confusion, and having reaped no other fruit from all his intrigues, but that of embroiling himself with the three kings, Charles, Augustus, and Stanislaus; and with the republic and the pope, who had ordered him to repair to Rome to give an account of his conduct. But as politicians even are sometimes touched with remorse in their last moments, he wrote to King Augustus on his death-bed and begged his pardon.

The consecration was performed with equal tranquillity and magnificence, on the fourth of October, 1705, in the city of Warsaw, notwithstanding the usual custom of the Poles, of crowning their kings at Cracow. Stanislaus Leczinski and his wife Charlotta Opalinska, were consecrated King and Queen of Poland, by the hands of the Archbishop of Leo-

pold, assisted by several other prelates. Charles XII. saw the ceremony incognito, the only advantage he reaped from his conquests.

While he was thus giving a king to the conquered Poles, and Denmark durst not presume to create any disturbances; while the King of Prussia courted his friendship, and Augustus had retired to his hereditary dominions, the czar was every day becoming more and more formidable. Though he had given but little assistance to Augustus in Poland, he had nevertheless made powerful diversions in Ingria.

He was not only beginning to be a good soldier himself, but likewise instructed his subjects in the art of war. Discipline was established among his troops. He had good engineers, well served artillery, and several good officers, and he understood the great secret of subsisting his armies. Some of his generals had learned both how to fight, and as occasion required, to decline fighting; and he had besides formed a respectable navy capable of making head against the Swedes in the Baltic.

Strengthened by all these advantages which were entirely owing to his own genius, and by the absence of the King of Sweden, he took Narva by assault, on the twenty-first of August, 1704, after a regular siege, during which he had prevented its receiving any succors either by sea or land. The soldiers were no sooner masters of the city than they ran to pillage, and abandoned themselves to the most enormous barbarities. The czar flew from place to place to stop the disorder and carnage. He snatched the women from the hands of the sol-

diers who, after having ravished them, were going to cut their throats. He was even obliged to kill some Muscovites who did not obey his orders. They still show you, in the town house of Narva, the table upon which he laid his sword as he entered, and repeat the words which he spoke to the citizens who were there assembled: "It is not with the blood of the inhabitants that this sword is stained, but with that of the Muscovites, which I have shed to save your lives."

Had the czar always observed these humane maxims, he would have been the greatest man in the world. He aspired to a nobler character than that of a destroyer of towns. He was, at that time, laying the foundation of a city not far from Narva, in the middle of his new conquests. This was the city of St. Petersburg which he afterwards made the place of his residence, and the centre of his trade. It is situated between Finland and Ingria, on a marshy island around which the Neva divides itself into several branches, before it falls into the Gulf of Finland. With his own hands he drew the plan of the city, the fortress, and the harbor, the quays that embellished it, and the forts which defended its entrance. This desert and uncultivated island which, during the short summer in those climates, was only a heap of mud, and in winter a frozen pool, into which there was no entry by land but through pathless forests and deep morasses, and which had hitherto been the haunt of wolves and bears, was filled in 1703 with above three hundred thousand men whom the czar had brought thither from his other dominions. The peasants of

the kingdom of Astrakhan and those who inhabit the frontiers of China, were transported to St. Petersburg. He was obliged to clear forests, to make roads, to drain marshes, and to raise banks, before he could lay the foundation of the city. The whole was a force put upon nature. The czar was determined to people a country which did not seem designed for the habitation of men. Neither the inundation which razed his works, nor the sterility of the soil, nor the ignorance of the workmen, nor even the mortality which carried off about two hundred thousand men in the beginning of the undertaking, could divert him from his firm resolution. The town was founded amidst the obstacles which nature, the genius of the people, and an unsuccessful war, conspired to raise against it. St. Petersburg had become a city in 1705, and its harbor was filled with ships. The emperor, by a proper distribution of favors, drew many strangers thither, bestowing lands upon some, horses upon others, and encouraging all the artists that came to civilize this barbarous climate. Above all, he had rendered it proof against the utmost efforts of his enemies. The Swedish generals, who frequently beat his troops in every other quarter, were never able to hurt his infant colony. It enjoyed profound tranquillity in the midst of the war with which it was surrounded.

While the czar was thus creating, as it were, new dominions to himself, he still held out a helping hand to Augustus who was losing his. He persuaded him, by means of General Patkul who had lately entered into the service of Muscovy, and was then the czar's ambassador in Saxony, to come to

Grodno to confer with him once more on the unhappy situation of his affairs. Thither Augustus repaired with some troops, accompanied by General Schulenburg who was now become famous over all the north for his passage across the Oder, and in whom the king reposed his last hopes. The czar arrived at the same place, followed by an army of seventy thousand men. The two monarchs concerted new measures for carrying on the war. Augustus being now dethroned, was no longer afraid of provoking the Poles, by abandoning their country to the Muscovite troops. It was resolved that the army of the czar should be divided into several bodies, to check at every step the progress of the King of Sweden. It was at this time that Augustus renewed the order of the White Eagle, a weak expedient for attaching to his interest some Polish lords who were more desirous of real advantages than of an empty honor which becomes ridiculous when it is held of a prince possessed of nothing but the name of king. The conference of the two kings ended in a very extraordinary manner. The czar, leaving his troops to his ally, departed suddenly to extinguish a rebellion with which he was threatened in Astrakhan. Immediately after his departure, Augustus ordered Patkul to be arrested at Dresden. All Europe was surprised at his conduct in presuming contrary to the law of nations, and even, in appearance, to his own interest, to imprison the ambassador of the only prince from whom he could expect any assistance.

The secret spring of this transaction, as I had the honor to be informed by Marshal Saxe, son to

King Augustus, was as follows: Patkul, proscribed in Sweden for having defended the privileges of Livonia, his native country, had been general to Augustus; but his high and lofty spirit being unable to brook the haughty behavior of General Flemming, the king's favorite, more imperious and lofty than himself, he had passed into the service of the czar whose general ambassador at the court of Augustus he then was. Endowed with a penetrating genius, he had observed that Flemming and the Chancellor of Saxony intended to purchase a peace from the King of Sweden at any price. He forthwith formed a design to prevent them, and to effect an accommodation between the czar and Sweden. The chancellor discovered his project, and obtained leave to seize him. Augustus told the czar that Patkul was a perfidious wretch and would betray them both. And yet he was no further culpable than in having served his new master too well; but an ill-timed piece of service frequently meets with the punishment due to treason.

Meanwhile, the sixty thousand Russians, divided into several small bodies, were burning and ravaging the lands of Stanislaus's adherents, on one side; and on the other, Schulenburg was advancing with fresh troops. The fortune of the Swedes dispersed these two armies in less than two months. Charles XII. and Stanislaus attacked the separate bodies of the Muscovites, one after another, and with so much vigor and despatch that one Muscovite general was beaten before he heard of the defeat of his companion.

Nothing could stop the progress of the con-

queror. If a river intervened between him and the enemy, Charles XII. and his Swedes swam across it. A party of Swedes took the baggage of Augustus, in which were found two hundred thousand crowns of silver. Stanislaus seized eight hundred thousand ducats belonging to Prince Menzikoff, the Russian general. Charles, at the head of his cavalry, marched thirty leagues in four and twenty hours; every soldier leading a horse in his hand to mount when his own was weary. The Muscovites, struck with terror, and reduced to a small number, fled in disorder beyond the Boristhenes.

While Charles was driving the Muscovites before him into the heart of Lithuania, Schulenburg at last repassed the Oder, and came at the head of twenty thousand men to give battle to the grand marshal, Renschild, who was reckoned the best general that Charles had, and was called the Parmenio of this Alexander of the North. These two illustrious generals who seemed to share the fate of their masters, met near Punitz, in a place called Fraustadt, a spot already familiar to the troops of Augustus. Renschild had only thirteen battalions, and two and twenty squadrons, amounting in all to about ten thousand men. Schulenburg had double that number. It is worthy of remark, that there was in his army a body of six or seven thousand Muscovites who had been long disciplined, and were esteemed good soldiers. The battle of Fraustadt was fought on the twelfth of February, 1706. But this very General Schulenburg who, with four and twenty thousand men, had, in some measure, baffled the good fortune of the King of Sweden,

sank under that of General Renschild. The combat did not last a quarter of an hour; the Saxons made no resistance; the Muscovites threw down their arms the moment they saw the Swedes. The panic was so sudden, and the confusion so great, that the conquerors found on the field of battle seven thousand loaded fusees which the enemy had thrown away without firing. No defeat was ever more sudden, more complete, or more disgraceful; and yet no general ever made a finer disposition of his troops than Schulenburg, even by the confession of the Saxon and Swedish generals themselves who this day saw how little human prudence is able to command events.

Among the prisoners there was an entire regiment of Frenchmen. These unhappy men had been taken by the Saxons in 1704, at the famous battle of Höchstädt, so fatal to the grandeur of Louis XIV. They had afterwards passed into the service of Augustus who had formed them into a regiment of dragoons, the command of which he had given to a Frenchman of the family of Joyeuse. The colonel was killed at the first, or rather the only charge of the Swedes; and the whole regiment was made prisoners of war. That very day the French begged to be admitted into the service of Charles XII., into which they were accordingly received by a strange caprice of fortune, which reserved them once more to change their master and their conqueror.

With regard to the Muscovites, they begged their lives on their knees; but the Swedes cruelly put them to death above six hours after the battle, in

order to avenge on them the outrages which their countrymen had committed, and to rid their hands of those prisoners whom they did not know how to dispose of.

Augustus now saw himself deprived of all resources. He had nothing left but Cracow where he was shut up with two regiments of Muscovites, two of Saxons, and some troops of the army of the crown, by whom he was even afraid of being delivered up to the conqueror; but his misfortunes were completed when he heard that Charles XII. had at last entered Saxony, on the first of September, 1706.

He had marched through Silesia, without so much as deigning to apprise the court of Vienna of his motions. Germany was struck with consternation. The Diet of Ratisbon, which represents the empire, and whose resolutions are frequently as ineffectual as they are solemn, declared the King of Sweden an enemy of the empire, if he should pass the Oder with his army; a step which only determined him to march the sooner into Germany.

At his approach the villages were deserted, and the inhabitants fled on all sides. Charles behaved in the same manner as he had done at Copenhagen: he caused a declaration to be fixed up in all public places, importing that his only intention in coming was to procure peace, that all those who should return home and pay the contributions he demanded, should be treated as his own subjects, and the rest punished without mercy. This declaration from a prince who was never known to break his word, made all those who had fled for fear, return home.

He pitched his camp at Altranstädt, near the plain of Lützen, a field famous for the victory and death of Gustavus Adolphus. He went to see the place where that great man fell. When he reached the spot, "I have endeavored," said he, "to live like him: God, perhaps, will one day grant me as glorious a death."

From this camp, he sent orders to the states of Saxony to assemble, and to transmit to him, without delay, the registers of the electoral finances. As soon as he had gotten them in his power, and was exactly informed how much Saxony could supply, he taxed it at six hundred twenty-five thousand rix-dollars a month. Over and above this contribution, the Saxons were obliged to furnish every Swedish soldier with two pounds of flesh, two pounds of bread, two pots of beer, and four pence a day, with forage for his horse. The contributions being thus regulated, the king established a new police, to protect the Saxons from the insults of his soldiers. In all the towns where he placed garrisons, he ordered the innkeepers, in whose houses the soldiers were quartered, to deliver every month certificates of their behavior, without which the soldiers were to have no pay. Besides, inspectors were appointed, who, once in every fifteen days, went from house to house to make inquiry whether the Swedes had committed any outrage; in which case, care was taken to indemnify the innkeepers, and to punish the offenders.

It is well known under what severe discipline the troops of Charles XII. were kept; that they never plundered the towns which they took by assault till

they had received permission; and that they even plundered in a regular manner and left off at the first signal. The Swedes pique themselves to this day on the strict discipline which they observed in Saxony; and yet the Saxons complain of the terrible ravages they committed; contradictions which it would be impossible to reconcile, did not we know in what very different lights the same objects appear to different men. It could hardly happen but that the conquerors must sometimes have abused their rights; and the conquered have taken the slightest injuries for the most enormous outrages. One day, as the king was taking the air, on horseback, in the neighborhood of Leipsic, a Saxon peasant threw himself at his feet, begging he would do him justice in regard to a grenadier who had just taken from him what was designed for his family's dinner. The king ordered the soldier to be brought before him and "Is it true that you have robbed this man?" said he, with a stern countenance. "Sir," said the soldier, "I have not done him so much harm as you have done to his master: you have taken a kingdom from him, and I have only taken a turkey from this fellow." The king gave the peasant ten ducats with his own hand, and pardoned the soldier for the wit and boldness of the reply; adding, "Remember, friend, that, if I have taken a kingdom from Augustus, I have kept nothing for myself."

The great fair of Leipsic was held as usual. The merchants came thither in perfect security. Not one Swedish soldier was to be seen in the fair. One would have said that the army of the King of

Sweden was in Saxony for no other reason than to watch over the safety of the country. He commanded throughout all the electorate with a power as absolute, and a tranquillity as profound, as if he had been in Stockholm.

Augustus wandering up and down Poland, and deprived at once of his kingdom and electorate, at last wrote a letter with his own hand to Charles XII. in which he humbly sued for peace. This letter he sent secretly by Baron d'Imhof and Mr. Fingsten, referendary of the privy council, to which two gentlemen he gave full power and a blank signed. "Go," said he to them, "endeavor to procure me reasonable and Christian conditions." He was obliged, however, to conceal these overtures, and to decline the mediation of any prince; for, being then in Poland, at the mercy of the Muscovites, he had reason to fear that this dangerous ally whom he was now going to abandon would punish him for his submission to the conqueror. His two plenipotentiaries came to Charles's camp in the nighttime, and had a private audience. The king having read the letter, told them they should have his answer in a moment; and accordingly retiring to his closet, he wrote as follows:

"I consent to give peace on the following conditions, in which it must not be expected that I will ever make the least alteration.

I. That Augustus renounce the crown of Poland forever; that he acknowledge Stanislaus as lawful king; and that he promise never to remount the throne, not even after the death of Stanislaus.

II. That he renounce all other treaties, and particularly those he has made with Muscovy.

III. That he send back to my camp, in an honorable manner, the princes Sobieski, and all the prisoners he has taken.

IV. That he deliver into my hands all the deserters that have entered into his service, and particularly John Patkul; and that he stop all proceedings against such as have passed from his service into mine."

This paper he gave to Count Piper, with orders to transact the rest with the plenipotentiaries of Augustus. These gentlemen were shocked at the cruelty of the proposals; and used all the little arts that men without power can employ, to soften, if possible, the rigor of the King of Sweden. They had several conferences with Count Piper; but that minister answered all their arguments with this short reply: "Such is the will of the king, my master, and he never alters his resolution."

While these negotiations were being carried on in Saxony, fortune seemed to put Augustus in a condition to obtain more honorable terms, and of treating with his conqueror on a more equal footing.

Prince Menzikoff, generalissimo of the Muscovite army, brought into Poland a body of thirty thousand men, at a time when Augustus not only did not desire their assistance, but even feared it. He had with him some Polish and Saxon troops, making in all about six thousand men. Surrounded with this small body by the army of Prince Menzikoff, he had everything to fear, in case the negotia-

tion should be discovered. He saw himself at once dethroned by his enemy, and in danger of being arrested by his ally. In this delicate conjuncture, one of the Swedish generals, named Meyerfeld, at the head of ten thousand men, appeared at Calish, near the palatinate of Posnania. Prince Menzikoff pressed Augustus to give them battle. The king, who was greatly embarrassed, delayed the engagement under various pretexts; for though the enemy had but one-third of his number, there were four thousand Swedes in Meyerfeld's army, and that alone was sufficient to render the event doubtful. To give battle to the Swedes during the negotiation, and to lose it, was, in effect, to deepen the abyss in which he was already plunged. He therefore resolved to send a trusty servant to the general of the enemy, to give him some distant hints with regard to the peace, and advise him to retreat. But this advice produced an effect quite contrary to what he expected. General Meyerfeld thought they were laying a snare to intimidate him; and for that reason resolved to hazard a battle.

The Russians, now for the first time, conquered the Swedes in a pitched battle. This victory, which Augustus gained almost against his will, was entire and complete. In the midst of his bad fortune, he entered triumphantly into Warsaw, formerly his flourishing capital, but then a dismantled and ruined town, ready to receive any conqueror, and to acknowledge the strongest for king. He was tempted to seize upon this moment of prosperity to go and attack the King of Sweden in Saxony with the Muscovite army. But when he reflected that

Charles XII. was at the head of a Swedish army, hitherto invincible; that the Russians would abandon him on the first intelligence of the treaty he had begun; that his Saxon dominions, already drained of men and money, would be equally ravaged by the Swedes and Muscovites; that the empire, engaged in a war with France, could afford him no assistance; and that, in the end, he should be left without dominions, money, or friends; he thought it most advisable to comply with the terms which the King of Sweden should impose. These terms became still more hard when Charles heard that Augustus had attacked his troops during the negotiation. His resentment, and the pleasure of further humbling an enemy who had just vanquished his forces, made him inflexible upon all the articles of the treaty. Thus the victory of Augustus served only to render his situation the more miserable, a thing which perhaps never happened to anyone but him.

He had just caused *Te Deum* to be sung at Warsaw, when Fingsten, one of his plenipotentiaries, arrived from Saxony with the treaty of peace which deprived him of his crown. Augustus hesitated for a little, but at last signed it; and then set out for Saxony, vainly hoping that his presence would soften the King of Sweden, and that his enemy would perhaps remember the ancient alliances of their families, and the common blood that ran in the veins of both.

These two princes met for the first time in Count Piper's tent, at a place called Guntersdorf, without any ceremony. Charles XII. was in jack-boots,

with a piece of black taffeta tied round his neck instead of a cravat: his clothes, as usual, were of coarse blue cloth, with brass buttons. He had a long sword by his side, which had served him in the battle of Narva, and upon the pommel of which he frequently leaned. The conversation turned wholly upon these jack-boots; Charles XII. told Augustus that he had not laid them aside for these six years past, except when he went to bed. These trifles were the only subject of discourse between two kings, one of whom had deprived the other of a crown. Augustus, especially, spoke with an air of complaisance and satisfaction, which princes and men accustomed to the management of great affairs, know how to assume amidst the most cruel mortifications. The two kings dined together twice. Charles XII. always affected to give Augustus the right hand; but, far from mitigating the rigor of his demands, he rendered them still more severe. It was certainly a very mortifying thing for a sovereign to be forced to deliver up a general officer and a public minister. It was still a greater debasement to be obliged to send the jewels and archives of the crown to his successor, Stanislaus. But what completed his degradation was his being at last compelled to congratulate, on his accession to the throne, the man who was going to usurp his place. Charles required Augustus to write a letter to Stanislaus. The dethroned king endeavored to evade the demand; but Charles insisted upon his writing the letter, and he was at last obliged to comply. Here follows an exact copy of it, which I have seen. It is transcribed from the

original, which is still in the possession of King Stanislaus.

"Sir and Brother:

We little imagined it would have been necessary to enter into a literary correspondence with your majesty; nevertheless, in order to please his Swedish majesty, and to avoid the suspicion of our being unwilling to gratify his desire, we hereby congratulate you on your accession to the throne; and wish you may find in your native country more faithful subjects than we have left there. All the world will do us the justice to believe that we have received nothing but the most ungrateful returns for our good offices, and that the greater part of our subjects seemed to have no other aim than to hasten our ruin. Wishing that you may never be exposed to the like misfortunes, we commit you to the protection of God.

Your brother and neighbor,

Dresden, April 8, 1707. AUGUSTUS, King."

Augustus was obliged to give orders to all his magistrates no longer to style him King of Poland, and to erase this title, which he now renounced, out of the public prayers. He was less averse to the releasing of the Sobieskis; but the sacrifice of Patkul was the severest of all. The czar, on the one hand, loudly demanded him back as his ambassador; and on the other, the King of Sweden, with the most terrible menaces in case of a refusal, insisted that he should be delivered up to him. Patkul was then confined in the castle of Königstein, in Saxony. Augustus thought he might easily gratify Charles XII. and save his own honor. He sent his guards to deliver this unhappy man to the

Swedish troops; but he previously despatched a secret order to the Governor of Königstein, to let his prisoner escape. The bad fortune of Patkul defeated the pains that were taken to save him. The governor, knowing that Patkul was very rich, had a mind to make him purchase his liberty. The prisoner still relying on the law of nations and informed of the intentions of Augustus, refused to pay for that which he thought he had a title to obtain for nothing. During this interval, the guards who were commissioned to seize the prisoner arrived, and immediately delivered him to four Swedish captains, who carried him forthwith to the general quarters at Altranstädt, where he remained for three months tied to a stake, with a heavy iron chain; and from thence was conducted to Casimir.

Charles XII. forgetting that Patkul was the czar's ambassador, and considering him only as his own subject, ordered a council of war to try him with the utmost rigor. He was condemned to be broken alive, and quartered. A chaplain having come to inform him of the fatal sentence, without acquainting him with the manner in which it was to be executed, Patkul, who had braved death in so many battles, finding himself shut up with a priest, and his courage being no longer supported by glory or passion, the only sources of human intrepidity, poured out a flood of tears upon the chaplain's bosom. He was affianced to a Saxon lady, called Madam d'Einsiedel, a woman of birth, of merit, and of beauty, whom he had intended to marry about the very time that he was now condemned to die. He entreated the chaplain to wait

upon her, to give her all the consolation he could, and to assure her that he died full of the most tender affection for his incomparable mistress. When he was brought to the place of punishment, and beheld the wheels and stakes prepared for his execution, he fell into convulsions, and threw himself into the arms of the minister who embraced him, covered him with his cloak, and wept over him. Then a Swedish officer read aloud a paper to the following effect:

"This is to declare that it is the express order of his majesty, our most merciful lord, that this man who is a traitor to his country, be broken upon the wheel, and quartered, in order to atone for his crimes, and to be an example to others; that every one may beware of treason, and faithfully serve his king." At the words, "most merciful lord," Patkul cried out, "What mercy?" and at those of "traitor to his country," "Alas!" said he, "I have served it but too well!" He received sixteen blows, and suffered the longest and most excruciating tortures that can be imagined. Thus died the unfortunate John Reginald Patkul, ambassador and general of the Emperor of Russia.

Those who looked upon him only as a rebel, said that he deserved death; but those who considered him as a Livonian, born in a province that had privileges to defend, and remembered that he had been banished from Livonia for no other reason than his having defended those privileges, called him a martyr to the liberty of his country. But all agreed that the title of ambassador to the czar ought to have rendered his person sacred.

The King of Sweden alone, brought up in the principles of arbitrary power, thought that he had performed only an act of justice, whilst all Europe condemned his cruelty.

His mangled limbs remained exposed upon gibbets till 1713, when Augustus having regained his throne, caused these testimonies of the necessity to which he was reduced at Altranstädt to be gathered together. They were brought to Warsaw in a box, and delivered to him in presence of the French envoy. The King of Poland showing the box to this minister, only said: "These are the limbs of Patkul"; without adding anything, either to blame his conduct or to bewail his memory, and without any one daring to speak on so delicate and mournful a subject.

About this time, a Livonian called Paikel, an officer of the Saxon troops, who had been taken prisoner in the field, was condemned at Stockholm by a decree of the senate; but his sentence was only to lose his head. This difference of punishments in the same case, made it but too plain that Charles, in putting Patkul to such a cruel death, was more anxious to revenge himself than to punish the criminal. Be that as it may, Paikel, after his condemnation, proposed to the senate to impart to the king the secret of making gold, on condition that he should obtain his pardon. He made the experiment in prison, in presence of Colonel Hamilton and the magistrates of the town; and whether he had actually discovered some useful secret, or, which is more probable, had only acquired the art of deceiving with a plausible air, they carried the

gold which was found in the crucible to the mint at Stockholm, and gave the senate such a full, and seemingly such an important account of the matter, that the queen-dowager, Charles's grandmother, ordered the execution to be suspended till the king should be informed of this uncommon affair, and should send his orders accordingly.

The king made answer that he had refused the pardon of the criminal to the entreaties of his friends, and that he would never grant to interest what he had denied to friendship. This inflexibility had something in it very heroical in a prince, especially as he thought the secret practicable. Augustus, upon hearing this story, said: "I am not surprised at the King of Sweden's indifference about the philosopher's stone: he has found it in Saxony."

When the czar was informed of the strange peace which Augustus had, notwithstanding their former treaties, concluded at Altranstädt; and that Patkul, his ambassador-plenipotentiary, was delivered up to the King of Sweden in contempt of the law of nations, he loudly complained of these indignities to the courts of Europe. He wrote to the Emperor of Germany, to the Queen of England, and to the States-General of the United Provinces. He gave the terms of cowardice and treachery to the sad necessity to which Augustus had been obliged to submit. He conjured all these powers to interpose their mediation to procure the restoration of his ambassador, and to prevent the affront which, in his person, was going to be offered to all crowned heads. He pressed them, by the motive of

honor, not to demean themselves so far as to become guaranties of the treaty of Altranstädt; a concession which Charles XII. meant to extort from them by his threatening and imperious behavior. These letters had no other effect than to set the power of the King of Sweden in a stronger light. The emperor, England, and Holland, were then engaged in a destructive war against France, and thought it a very unseasonable juncture to exasperate Charles XII. by refusing the vain ceremony of being guaranties to a treaty. With regard to the unhappy Patkul, there was not a single power that interposed its good offices in his behalf; from which it appears what little confidence a subject ought to put in princes, and how much all the European powers at that time stood in awe of the King of Sweden.

It was proposed in the czar's council to retaliate on the Swedish officers who were prisoners at Moscow; but the czar would not consent to a barbarity which would have been attended with fatal consequences, as there were more Muscovite prisoners in Sweden, than Swedes in Muscovy.

He resolved to take a more advantageous revenge. The main body of his enemy's army lay idle in Saxony. Löwenhaupt, the King of Sweden's general, who was left in Poland with about twenty thousand men, was not able to guard the passes into a country without forts, and full of factions. Stanislaus was in the camp of Charles XII. The Emperor of Muscovy seizes this opportunity, and re-enters Poland with above 60,000 men. These he divides into several bodies, and marches with a

flying camp to Leopold where there was no Swedish garrison. All the towns of Poland yield to any one who appears before their gates at the head of an army. He caused an assembly to be convoked at Leopold, of much the same nature with that which had dethroned Augustus at Warsaw.

At that time Poland had two primates as well as two kings, the one nominated by Augustus, the other by Stanislaus. The primate nominated by Augustus summoned the assembly of Leopold, to which resorted all those whom that prince had abandoned by the peace of Altranstädt, and such as were gained by the czar's money. Here it was proposed to elect a new sovereign; so that Poland was almost upon the point of having three kings at once, without being able to say which was the real one.

During the conferences at Leopold, the czar, whose interest was closely connected with that of the Emperor of Germany on account of the common dread which they both entertained of the power of the King of Sweden, secretly obtained from him a number of German officers who daily arriving, increased his strength to a considerable degree, by bringing along with them discipline and experience. These he engaged in his service by several instances of liberality; and the more to encourage his own troops, he gave his picture set round with diamonds to all the general officers and colonels who had fought at the battle of Calish: the subaltern officers had medals of gold, and every private soldier a medal of silver. These monuments of the victory at Calish were all struck in

the new city of St. Petersburg where the improvement of the arts kept pace with the desire for glory and spirit of emulation which the czar had infused into his troops.

The confusion, the multiplicity of factions, and the continual ravages prevailing in Poland, hindered the Diet of Leopold from coming to any resolution. The czar transferred it to Lublin; but the change of place did not lessen the disorder and perplexity in which the whole nation was involved. The assembly contented themselves with declaring that they neither acknowledged Augustus who had abdicated the throne, nor Stanislaus who had been elected against their will; but they were not sufficiently united, or endowed with enough resolution to nominate another king. During these fruitless deliberations, the parties of the princes Sapieha and Oginski, those who secretly adhered to Augustus, and the new subjects of Stanislaus, all made war upon one another, and by pillaging each other's estates, completed the ruin of their country. The Swedish troops, commanded by Löwenhaupt, one part of which lay in Livonia, another in Lithuania, and a third in Poland, were daily in pursuit of the Russians, and set fire to everything that opposed Stanislaus. The Russians ruined their friends and foes without distinction; and nothing was to be seen but towns reduced to ashes, and wandering troops of Poles deprived of all their substance, and detesting alike their two kings, the czar, and Charles XII.

To quell these commotions, and to secure the possession of the throne, Stanislaus set out from

Altranstädt on the 15th of July, 1707, accompanied by General Renschild and sixteen Swedish regiments, and furnished with a large sum of money. He was acknowledged wherever he came. The strict discipline of his troops, which made the barbarity of the Muscovites more sensibly felt, conciliated the affections of the people. His extreme affability, in proportion as it was better known, reconciled to him almost all the different factions; and his money procured him the greatest part of the army of the crown. The czar, apprehensive of wanting provisions, in a country which his troops had laid waste, retired into Lithuania where he had fixed the general rendezvous of his army and where he resolved to establish magazines. This retreat left Stanislaus the undisturbed sovereign of the greatest part of Poland.

The only person that gave him any uneasiness, was Count Siniawsky, grand general of the crown, by the nomination of Augustus. This man, who was possessed of no contemptible talents, and entertained the most ambitious views, was at the head of a third party. He acknowledged neither Augustus nor Stanislaus; and after having used his utmost efforts in order to procure his own election, he contented himself with being the head of a party, since he could not be king. The troops of the crown, which continued under his command, had no other pay but the liberty of pillaging with impunity their fellow subjects. And all those who had either suffered, or were apprehensive of suffering, from the rapacity of these freebooters, soon

submitted to Stanislaus whose power was gathering strength every day.

The King of Sweden was then receiving, in his camp at Altranstädt, ambassadors from almost all the princes in Christendom. Some entreated him to quit the empire, others desired him to turn his arms against the emperor; and it was then the general report that he intended to join with France in humbling the house of Austria. Among these ambassadors was the famous John, Duke of Marlborough, sent by Anne, Queen of Great Britain. This man, who never besieged a town which he did not take, nor fought a battle which he did not gain, was at St. James's a perfect courtier, in parliament the head of a party, and in foreign countries the most able negotiator of his time. He did France as much mischief by his politics as by his arms. M. Fagel, secretary of the States-General, and a man of great merit, has been heard to say, that when the States-General had more than once resolved to oppose the schemes which the duke was about to lay before them, the duke came, spoke to them in French, a language in which he expressed himself but very indifferently, and brought them all over to his opinion. This account I had from Lord Bolingbroke.

In conjunction with Prince Eugene, the companion of his victories, and Heinsius, the grand pensionary of Holland, he supported the whole weight of the war which the allies waged against France. He knew that Charles was incensed against the empire and the emperor; that he was secretly solicited by the French; and that if this conqueror

should espouse the cause of Louis XIV. the allies must be ruined entirely.

True it is, Charles had given his word in 1700 that he would not intermeddle in the quarrel between Louis XIV. and the allies; but the Duke of Marlborough could not believe that any prince would be so great a slave to his word as not to sacrifice it to his grandeur and interest. He therefore set out from The Hague with a resolution to sound the intentions of the King of Sweden. M. Fabricius, who then attended upon Charles XII., assured me, that the Duke of Marlborough, on his arrival, applied secretly, not to Count Piper, the prime minister, but to Baron de Gortz, who now began to share with Piper the confidence of the king. He even went to the quarters of Charles XII. in the coach of this gentleman,* between whom and the chancellor Piper there was now a marked coolness, together with Robinson, the English minister, he spoke to the king in French. He told him that he should esteem it a singular happiness, could he have an opportunity of learning under his command such parts of the art of war as he did not yet understand. To this polite compliment the king made no return, and seemed to forget that it was Marl-

* When the duke arrived at the quarters of Count Piper, of whom he had demanded an audience, he was told the count was busy, and was obliged to wait half an hour before the Swedish minister came down to receive him. Then the duke alighted from his coach, put on his hat, passed the count without saluting him, went aside to the wall, where having staid a few minutes, he returned and accosted Piper with the most polite address.

borough who was speaking to him. He even thought, as I have been credibly informed, that the dress of this great man was too fine and costly; and that his air had in it too little of a soldier. The conversation was tedious and general; Charles XII. speaking in the Swedish tongue, and Robinson serving as an interpreter. Marlborough, who was never in a haste to make proposals and who, by a long course of experience, had learned the art of diving into the real characters of men, and discovering the connection between their most secret thoughts and their actions, gestures, and discourse, regarded the king with the utmost attention. When he spoke to him of war in general, he thought he perceived in his majesty a natural aversion to France; and remarked that he talked with pleasure of the conquests of the allies. He mentioned the czar to him, and observed that his eyes always kindled at the name, notwithstanding the calmness of the conversation. Besides, he saw a map of Muscovy lying before him upon the table. He wanted no more to convince him that the real design and the sole ambition of the King of Sweden was to dethrone the czar, as he had already done the King of Poland. He was sensible that, if Charles remained in Saxony, it was only to impose some hard conditions on the Emperor of Germany. He knew the emperor would make no resistance, and that thus all disputes would be easily accommodated. He left Charles XII. to follow the bent of his own mind; and satisfied with having discovered his intentions he made him no proposals.

These particulars I had from the Duchess of Marlborough, his widow, who is still alive.*

As few negotiations are finished without money, and as ministers are sometimes seen to sell the hatred or favor of their masters, it was the general opinion throughout all Europe, that the Duke of Marlborough would not have succeeded so well with the King of Sweden, had he not made a handsome present to Count Piper whose memory still labors under the imputation. For my own part, after having traced this report to its source, with all the care and accuracy of which I am master, I have found that Piper received a small present from the emperor, by the hands of the Count de Wratislau, with the consent of his master, and not a farthing from the Duke of Marlborough. Certain it is, Charles was so firmly resolved to dethrone the Emperor of Russia that he asked nobody's advice on that subject, nor needed the instigation of Count Piper to prompt him to wreak his long meditated vengeance on the head of Peter Alexiowitz.

But what vindicates the character of that minister beyond all probability and cavil was the honor which, long after this period, was paid to his memory by Charles XII. who having heard that Piper was dead in Russia, caused his corpse to be transported to Stockholm, and gave him a magnificent funeral at his own expense.

The king, who had not as yet experienced any

* The author wrote in 1727, since which time, as appears from other dates, the work has undergone several corrections.

reverse of fortune, nor even met with any interruption in his victories, thought one year would be sufficient for dethroning the czar; after which, he imagined he might return in peace and constitute himself the arbiter of Europe. But, first of all, he resolved to humble the Emperor of Germany.

The Baron de Stralheim, the Swedish envoy at Vienna, had had a quarrel at a public entertainment, with the Count de Zobor, chamberlain of the emperor. The latter having refused to drink the health of Charles XII. and having bluntly declared that that prince had used his master ill, Stralheim gave him at once the lie and a box on the ear, and besides this insult, boldly demanded a reparation from the imperial court. The emperor, afraid of displeasing the King of Sweden, was obliged to banish his subject whom he ought rather to have avenged. Charles, not satisfied even with this condescension, insisted that Count Zobor should be delivered up to him. The pride of the court of Vienna was forced to stoop. The count was put into the hands of the king, who sent him back, after having kept him for some time as a prisoner at Stettin.

He further demanded, contrary to all the laws of nations, that they should deliver up to him fifteen hundred unhappy Muscovites who having escaped the fury of his arms, had fled for refuge into the empire. The emperor was obliged to yield even to this unreasonable demand; and had not the Russian envoy at Vienna given these unhappy wretches an opportunity of escaping by different roads, they must have been delivered into the hands of their enemies.

The third and last of his demands was the most daring. He declared himself the protector of the emperor's Protestant subjects in Silesia, a province belonging to the house of Austria and not to the empire. He insisted that the emperor should grant them the liberties and privileges which had been established by the treaties of Westphalia, but which were extinguished, or at least eluded by those of Ryswick. The emperor, who wanted only to get rid of such a dangerous neighbor, yielded once more, and granted all that he desired. The Lutherans of Silesia had above a hundred churches, which the Catholics were obliged to cede to them by this treaty: but of these advantages, which were now procured them by the King of Sweden's good fortune, they were afterwards deprived, when that prince was no longer in a condition to impose laws.

The emperor who made these forced concessions, and complied in everything with the will of Charles XII. was called Joseph; and was the eldest son of Leopold, and brother of Charles VI. who succeeded him. The pope's internuncio who then resided at the court of Joseph, reproached him in very severe terms, alleging that it was a most shameful condescension for a Catholic emperor, like him, to sacrifice the interest of his own religion to that of heretics. "You may think yourself very happy," replied the emperor, with a smile, "that the King of Sweden did not propose to make me a Lutheran; for if he had, I do not know what I might have done."

The Count de Wratislau, his ambassador with

Charles XII. brought to Leipsic the treaty in favor of the Silesians, signed with his master's hand; upon which Charles said, he was the emperor's very good friend. He was far from being pleased, however, with the court of Rome which had employed all its arts and intrigues, in order to traverse his scheme. He looked with the utmost contempt upon the weakness of that court which, having one-half of Europe for its irreconcilable enemy, and placing no confidence in the other half can support its credit only by the dexterity of its negotiations; and he therefore resolved to be revenged on his holiness. He told the Count de Wratislau, that the Swedes had formerly subdued Rome, and had not degenerated like her. He sent the pope word that he would one day re-demand the effects which Queen Christina had left at Rome. It is hard to say how far this young conqueror might have carried his resentment and his arms, had fortune favored his designs. At that time nothing appeared impossible to him. He had even sent several officers privately into Asia and Egypt, to take plans of the towns, and to examine into the strength of those countries. Certain it is, that if ever prince was able to overturn the empire of the Turks and Persians, and from thence pass into Italy, it was Charles XII. He was as young as Alexander, as brave, as enterprising, more indefatigable, more robust, and more temperate; and the Swedes perhaps were better soldiers than the Macedonians. But such projects, which are called divine when they succeed, are regarded only as chimeras when they prove abortive.

At last, having removed every difficulty, and accomplished all his designs; having humbled the emperor, given laws in the empire, protected the Lutheran religion in the midst of the Catholics, dethroned one king, crowned another, and rendered himself the terror of all the princes around him, he began to prepare for his departure. The pleasures of Saxony, where he had remained inactive for a whole year, had not made the least alteration in his manner of living. He mounted his horse thrice a day, rose at four in the morning, dressed himself with his own hands, drank no wine, sat at table only a quarter of an hour, exercised his troops every day, and knew no other pleasure than that of making Europe tremble.

The Swedes were still uncertain whither their king intended to lead them. They had only some slight suspicion that he meant to go to Moscow. A few days before his departure, he ordered the grand marshal of his household, to give him in writing the route from Leipsic—at that word he paused a moment, and, lest the marshal should discover his project, he added, with a smile—to all the capital cities of Europe. The marshal brought him a list of all these routes, at the head of which he placed, in great letters: "The route from Leipsic to Stockholm." The generality of Swedes were extremely desirous of returning home; but the king was far from the thoughts of carrying them back to their native country. "Marshal," says he, "I plainly see whither you would lead me; but we shall not return to Stockholm so soon."

The army was already on its march, and was

passing by Dresden. Charles was at the head of his men, always riding, as usual, two or three hundred paces before his guards. All of a sudden he vanished from their sight. Some officers advanced at full gallop to see where he was They ran in all directions, but could not find him. In a moment the alarm was spread over the whole army. The troops were ordered to halt: the generals assembled, and were already in the utmost consternation. At last they learned from a Saxon, who was passing by, what had become of the king.

As he was passing so near Dresden, he took it into his head to pay a visit to Augustus. He entered the town on horseback, followed by three or four general officers. The sentries at the gates asked them their names? Charles said his name was Carl, and that he was a bodyguard; and all the rest took fictitious names. Count Flemming, seeing them pass through the town, had only time to run and inform his master. All that could possibly be done on such an occasion immediately presented itself to the mind of that minister who laid it before Augustus. But Charles entered the chamber in his boots, before Augustus had time to recover from his surprise. Augustus was then sick, and in his nightgown; but dressed himself in a hurry. Charles breakfasted with him, as a traveller who comes to take leave of his friend; and then expressed his desire of viewing the fortifications. During the short time he employed in walking round them, a Livonian who had been condemned in Sweden, and now served in the Saxon army, imagining that he could never find a more favorable op-

portunity of obtaining his pardon, entreated Augustus to ask it of Charles, being fully convinced that his majesty would not refuse so small a favor to a prince from whom he had taken a crown, and in whose power he now was. Augustus readily undertook the charge. He was then at some distance from the king, and was conversing with Hord, a Swedish general. "I believe," said he, smiling, "your master will not refuse me." "You do not know him," replied General Hord, "he would rather refuse you here than anywhere else." Augustus however did not fail to prefer the petition in very pressing terms; and Charles refused it in such a manner as to prevent a repetition of the request. After having passed some hours in this strange visit, he embraced Augustus, and departed. Upon rejoining his army, he found all his generals still in consternation. They told him they had determined to besiege Dresden in case his majesty had been detained a prisoner. "Right," said the king, "they durst not." Next day, upon hearing the news that Augustus held an extraordinary council at Dresden: "You see," said Baron Stralheim, "they are deliberating upon what they should have done yesterday." A few days after Renschild, coming to wait upon the king, expressed his surprise at this unaccountable visit to Augustus. "I confided," said Charles, "in my good fortune; but I have seen the moment that might have proved prejudicial to me. Flemming had no mind that I should leave Dresden so soon."

CHAPTER IV.

Charles quits Saxony in a victorious manner: Pursues the Czar: Shuts himself up in the Ukraine. His losses: His wound: The battle of Poltava: Consequences of that battle: Charles obliged to fly into Turkey: His reception in Bessarabia.

CHARLES at last took leave of Saxony, in September, 1707, followed by an army of forty-three thousand men, formerly covered with steel, but now shining with gold and silver, and enriched with the spoils of Poland and Saxony. Every soldier carried with him fifty crowns in ready money. Not only were all the regiments complete, but in every company there were several supernumeraries. Besides this army, Count Löwenhaupt, one of his best generals, waited for him in Poland with twenty thousand men. He had another army of fifteen thousand in Finland; and fresh recruits were coming to him from Sweden. With all these forces it was not doubted but that he would easily dethrone the czar.

That ruler was already in Lithuania, endeavoring to reanimate a party which Augustus seemed to have abandoned. His troops, divided into several bodies, fled on all sides at the first report of the King of Sweden's approach. He himself had enjoined his generals never to wait for the conqueror with unequal forces; and he was scrupulously obeyed.

The King of Sweden, in the midst of his victorious march, received an ambassador from the Turks. The ambassador had his audience in Count Piper's quarters; for it was always in that minister's tent that ceremonies of pomp were performed. On these occasions he supported the dignity of his master, by an appearance which had in it something magnificent; and the king who was always worse lodged, worse served, and more plainly dressed than the meanest officer in his army, was wont to say, that his palace was Piper's quarters. The Turkish ambassador presented Charles with a hundred Swedish soldiers, who having been taken by the Calmucks and sold in Turkey, had been purchased by the Grand Seignior and sent him by that emperor as the most acceptable present he could make to his majesty; not that the Ottoman pride condescended to pay homage to the glory of Charles XII. but because the sultan, the natural enemy of the Russian and German emperors, was willing to fortify himself against them by the friendship of Sweden and the alliance of Poland. The ambassador complimented Stanislaus upon his accession to the throne; so that this king was acknowledged by Germany, France, England, Spain, and Turkey. There remained only the pope who, before he would acknowledge him, resolved to wait till time should have settled on his head that crown of which a reverse of fortune might easily deprive it.

Charles had no sooner given audience to the ambassador of the Ottoman Porte, than he went in pursuit of the Muscovites. The Russians, in the

course of the war, had quitted Poland and returned to it above twenty different times. That country, which is open on all sides, and has no places of strength to cut off the retreat of an army, gave the Muscovites an opportunity of sometimes revisiting the very spot where they had formerly been beaten, and even of penetrating as far into the heart of the kingdom as the conqueror himself. While Charles remained in Saxony, the czar had advanced as far as Leopold, situated at the southern extremity of Poland. Charles was then at Grodno in Lithuania, a hundred leagues to the northward of Leopold.

He left Stanislaus in Poland to defend his new kingdom, with the assistance of ten thousand Swedes and that of his own subjects, against all his enemies, both foreign and domestic. He then put himself at the head of his cavalry, and marched amidst frost and snow to Grodno, in the month of January, 1708.

He had already passed the Niemen, about two leagues from the town; and the czar as yet knew nothing of his march. Upon the first news of the approach of the Swedish army, the czar quits the town by the north gate, and Charles enters it by the south. Charles had only six hundred of his guards with him; the rest not being able to keep pace with his rapid march. The czar fled with above two thousand men, from an apprehension that a whole army was entering Grodno. That very day he was informed by a Polish deserter that he had abandoned the place to no more than six hundred men, and that the main body of the army was

still at the distance of five leagues. He lost no time: he detached fifteen hundred horse of his own troops, in the evening, to surprise the King of Sweden in the town. This detachment, under favor of the darkness, arrived undiscovered at the first Swedish guard which, though consisting only of thirty men, sustained, for a few minutes, the efforts of the whole fifteen hundred. The king, who happened to be at the other end of the town, flew to their assistance with the rest of his six hundred men; upon which the Russians fled with precipitation. In a short time his army arrived, and he then set out in pursuit of the enemy. All the corps of the Russian army, dispersed through Lithuania, retired hastily into the palatinate of Minsk, near the frontiers of Muscovy, where their general rendezvous was appointed. The Swedes, who were likewise divided into several bodies, continued to pursue the enemy for more than thirty leagues. The fugitives and the pursuers made forced marches almost every day, though in the middle of winter. For a long time past, all seasons of the year had become indifferent to the Swedes and Russians; and the only difference between them now arose from the terror of Charles's arms.

From Grodno to the Boristhenes eastward, there is nothing but morasses, deserts, and immense forests. In the cultivated spots there are no provisions to be had, the peasants burying under ground all their grain, and whatever else can be preserved in these subterranean receptacles. In order to discover these hidden magazines, the earth must be pierced with long poles pointed with iron.

The Muscovites and the Swedes alternately made use of these provisions; but they were not always to be found, and even then they were not sufficient.

The King of Sweden, who had foreseen these difficulties, had provided biscuit for the subsistence of his army, and nothing could stop him in his march. After having traversed the forest of Minsk where he was every moment obliged to cut down trees in order to clear the road for his troops and baggage, he found himself, on the 25th of June, 1708, on the banks of the river Berezina, opposite to Borisof.

In this place the czar had assembled the best part of his forces, and intrenched himself to great advantage. His design was to hinder the Swedes from crossing the river. Charles posted some regiments on the banks of the Berezina, over against Borisof, as if he meant to attempt a passage in the face of the enemy. Meanwhile he leads his army three leagues higher up the river, throws a bridge across it, cuts his way through a body of three thousand men who defended that pass and, without halting, marches against the main body of the enemy. The Russians did not await his approach, but decamped and retreated towards the Boristhenes, spoiling all the roads, and destroying everything in their way, in order, at least, to retard the progress of the Swedes.

Charles surmounted every obstacle, and still advanced towards the Boristhenes. In his way he met with twenty thousand Muscovites, intrenched in a place called Hollosin, behind a morass, which could not be approached without passing a river.

Charles did not delay the attack till the rest of his infantry should arrive: he plunges into the water at the head of his foot-guards, and crosses the river and the morass, the water frequently reaching above his shoulders. While he was thus pressing forward to the enemy, he ordered his cavalry to go round the morass and take them in flank. The Muscovites, surprised that no barrier could defend them, were instantly routed by the king who attacked them on foot, and by the Swedish cavalry.

The horse, having forced their way through the enemy, joined the king in the midst of the battle. He then mounted on horseback; but some time after, observing in the field a young Swedish gentleman, named Gyllenstiern, for whom he had a great regard, wounded and unable to walk, he forced him to take his horse, and continued to command on foot at the head of his infantry. Of all the battles he had ever fought, this was perhaps the most glorious; this was the one in which he encountered the greatest dangers, and displayed the most consummate skill and prudence. The memory of it is still preserved by a medal, with this inscription on one side: *Sylvæ, paludes, aggeres, hostes victi:** and on the other this verse of Lucan: *Victrices copias alium laturus in orbem.*†

The Russians, chased from all their posts, repassed the Boristhenes, which divides Poland from Muscovy. Charles did not give over the pursuit; but followed them across the Boristhenes, which he passed at Mohilou, the last town of Poland, and

* Woods, marshes, mounds, and enemies conquered.
† Wafting his warlike troops to other worlds.

which sometimes belongs to the Poles, and sometimes to the Russians; a fate common to frontier places.

The czar thus seeing his empire, where he had lately established the polite arts and a flourishing trade, exposed to a war, which, in a short time, might overturn all his mighty projects, and perhaps deprive him of his crown, began to think seriously of peace; and accordingly ventured to make some proposals for that purpose, by means of a Polish gentleman whom he sent to the Swedish army. Charles XII. who had not been used to grant peace to his enemies, except in their own capitals, replied: "I will treat with the czar at Moscow." When this haughty answer was reported to the czar, "My brother Charles," says he, "always affects to act the Alexander; but, I flatter myself, he will not find in me another Darius."

From Mohilou, the place where the king passed the Boristhenes, as you advance towards the north, along the banks of that river, and always on the frontiers of Poland and Muscovy, you meet with the country of Smolensk through which lies the great road that leads from Poland to Muscovy. This way the czar directed his flight; and the king pursued him by long marches. Part of the Russian rear-guard was frequently engaged with the dragoons of the Swedish vanguard. The latter had generally the advantage; but they weakened themselves even by conquering in these small skirmishes, which were never decisive, and in which they always lost a number of men.

On the 22d of September, 1708, the king at-

tacked, near Smolensk, a body of ten thousand horse, and six thousand Calmucks.

These Calmucks are Tartars, living between the kingdom of Astrakhan, which is subject to the czar, and that of Samarkand, belonging to the Usbeg Tartars, and the country of Timur, known by the name of Tamerlane. The country of the Calmucks extends eastward to the mountains which divide the Mogul from the western parts of Asia. Those who inhabit that part of the country which borders upon Astrakhan are tributary to the czar who pretends to an absolute authority over them; but their vagrant life hinders him from making good his claim, and obliges him to treat them in the same manner in which the Grand Seignior treats the Arabs, sometimes conniving at, and sometimes punishing their robberies. There are always some of these Calmucks in the Russian army; and the czar had even reduced them to a regular discipline, like the rest of his soldiers.

The king attacked these troops with only six regiments of horse, and four thousand foot; broke their ranks at the first onset, at the head of his Ostrogothic regiment, and obliged them to fly. He pursued them through rugged and hollow ways, where the Calmucks lay concealed, who soon began to show themselves and cut off from the rest of the Swedish army the regiment in which the king fought. In an instant the Russians and Calmucks surrounded this regiment, and penetrated even to the king. Two aides-de-camp who fought near him fell at his feet. The king's horse was killed under him; and as one of his equerries was

presenting him with another, both the equerry and horse were struck dead upon the spot. Charles fought on foot, surrounded by some of his officers who instantly flocked around him.

Many of them were taken, wounded, or slain, or pushed to a great distance from the king by the crowds that assailed them; so that he was left at last with no more than five attendants. With his own hand he had killed above a dozen of the enemy without receiving a single wound, owing to that surprising good fortune which had hitherto attended him, and upon which he always relied. At length a colonel, named Dardoff, forced his way through the Calmucks, with a single company of his regiment, and arrived soon enough to save the king. The rest of the Swedes put the Tartars to the sword. The army recovered its ranks; Charles mounted his horse and, fatigued as he was, pursued the Russians for two leagues.

The conqueror was still on the great road to the capital of Muscovy. The distance from Smolensk, near which the battle was fought, to Moscow, is about a hundred French leagues; and the army began to be in want of provisions. The officers earnestly entreated the king to wait till General Löwenhaupt, who was coming up with a reinforcement of fifteen thousand men, should arrive. The king, who seldom indeed took counsel of any one, not only rejected this wholesome advice, but, to the great astonishment of all the army, quitted the road to Moscow, and began to march southwards towards the Ukraine, the country of the Cossacks, lying between Little Tartary, Poland, and

Muscovy. This country extends about a hundred French leagues from south to north, and almost as many from east to west. It is divided into two parts, almost equal, by the Boristhenes, which runs from the northwest to the southeast. The chief town is called Bathurin, and is situated on the little river Sem. The northern part of the Ukraine is rich and well cultivated. The southern, near the forty-eighth degree of latitude, is one of the most fertile countries in the world, and yet one of the most desolate. Its bad form of government thwarts the blessings which nature exerts herself to bestow upon the inhabitants. The people of these cantons neither sow nor plant, because the Tartars of Budziac, Precop, and Moldavia, all of them free-booters and banditti, would rob them of their harvests.

Ukraine has always aspired to liberty; but being surrounded by Muscovy, the dominions of the Grand Seignior, and Poland, it has been obliged to choose a protector, and consequently a master, in one of these three states. The Ukranians at first put themselves under the protection of the Poles who treated them with great severity. They afterwards submitted to the Russians who governed them with despotic sway. They had originally the privilege of electing a prince under the name of general; but they were soon deprived of that right; and their general was nominated by the court of Moscow.

The person who then filled that station was a Polish gentleman, named Mazeppa, and born in the palatinate of Podolia. He had been brought

up as a page to John Casimir, and had received some tincture of learning in his court. An intrigue which he had had in his youth with the lady of a Polish gentleman, having been discovered, the husband caused him to be bound stark naked upon a wild horse and let loose in that condition. The horse, who had been brought out of Ukraine, returned to his own country, and carried Mazeppa along with him, half-dead with hunger and fatigue. Some of the country people gave him assistance; and he lived among them for a long time, and signalized himself in several expeditions against the Tartars. The superiority of his knowledge gained him great respect among the Cossacks; and his reputation daily increasing, the czar found it necessary to make him prince of Ukraine.

While he was one day at table with the czar at Moscow, the emperor proposed to him to discipline the Cossacks, and to render them more dependent. Mazeppa replied that the situation of Ukraine, and the genius of the nation, were insuperable obstacles to such a scheme. The czar, who began to be overheated with wine, and who had not always the command of his passions, called him a traitor, and threatened to have him empaled.

Mazeppa, on his return to Ukraine, formed the design of a revolt; and the execution of it was greatly facilitated by the Swedish army which soon after appeared on his frontiers. He resolved to render himself independent, and to erect Ukraine and some other ruins of the Russian Empire into a powerful kingdom. Brave, enterprising, and indefatigable, though advanced in years, he entered

into a secret league with the King of Sweden, to hasten the downfall of the czar, and to convert it to his own advantage.

The king appointed the rendezvous near the river Desna. Mazeppa promised to meet him there at the head of thirty thousand men, with ammunition and provisions, and all his treasures which were immense. The Swedish army therefore continued its march on that side, to the great grief of all the officers who knew nothing of the king's treaty with the Cossacks. Charles sent orders to Löwenhaupt to bring his troops and provisions with all possible despatch into Ukraine where he proposed to pass the winter, so that, having once secured that country, he might the more easily conquer Muscovy in the ensuing spring; and, in the meantime, he advanced towards the river Desna, which falls into the Boristhenes at Kiovia.

The obstructions they had hitherto found in their march were but trifling, in comparison with those found in this new road. They were obliged to cross a marshy forest fifty leagues in length. General Lagercron, who marched before with five thousand soldiers and pioneers, led the army astray to the eastward, thirty leagues from the right road. It was not till after a march of four days that the king discovered the mistake. With great difficulty they regained the main road; but almost all their artillery and wagons were lost, being either stuck fast, or quite sunk in the mud.

At last, after a march of twelve days, attended with so many vexatious and untoward circumstances, during which they had consumed the small

quantity of biscuit that was left, the army, exhausted by hunger and fatigue arrived on the banks of the Desna, in the very spot which Mazeppa had marked out as the place of rendezvous; but instead of meeting with that prince, they found a body of Muscovites advancing towards the other bank of the river. The king was astonished, but resolved immediately to pass the Desna and attack the enemy. The banks of the river were so steep that they were obliged to let the soldiers down with ropes. They crossed it in their usual manner, some on floats which were made in haste, and others by swimming. The body of Muscovites which arrived at the same time did not exceed eight thousand men; so that it made but little resistance, and this obstacle was also surmounted.

Charles advanced farther into this desolate country, alike uncertain of his road and of Mazeppa's fidelity. That Cossack appeared at last, but rather like a fugitive than a powerful ally. The Muscovites had discovered and defeated his design; they had fallen upon the Cossacks and cut them to pieces. His principal friends being taken sword in hand, had, to the number of thirty, been broken upon the wheel; his towns were reduced to ashes; his treasures plundered; the provisions he was preparing for the King of Sweden seized; and it was with great difficulty that he himself made his escape with six thousand men, and some horses laden with gold and silver. However he gave the king some hopes that he should be able to assist him by his intelligence in that unknown country, and by the affection of all the Cossacks who being enraged

against the Russians, flocked to the camp and supplied the army with provisions.

Charles hoped that General Löwenhaupt at least would come and repair this misfortune. He was to bring with him about fifteen thousand Swedes, who were better than a hundred thousand Cossacks, together with ammunition and provisions. At length he arrived, in much the same condition as Mazeppa.

He had already passed the Boristhenes above Mohilou, and advanced twenty leagues beyond it, on the road to the Ukraine. He was bringing the king a convoy of eight thousand wagons, with the money which he had levied on his march through Lithuania. As he approached the town of Lesno, near the confluence of the rivers Pronia and Sossa, which fall into the Boristhenes far below, the czar appeared at the head of nearly forty thousand men.

The Swedish general who had not sixteen thousand all told, scorned to shelter himself in a fortified camp. A long train of victories had inspired the Swedes with so much confidence that they never informed themselves of the number of their enemies, but only of the place where they lay. Accordingly, on the seventh of October, 1708, in the afternoon Löwenhaupt advanced against them with great resolution. In the first attack the Swedes killed fifteen hundred Russians. The czar's army was thrown into confusion, and fled on all sides. The Emperor of Russia saw himself upon the point of being entirely defeated. He was sensible that the safety of his dominions depended upon the success of this day, and that he would

be utterly ruined, should Löwenhaupt join the King of Sweden with a victorious army.

The moment he saw his troops begin to flinch, he ran to the rear-guard where the Cossacks and Calmucks were posted. "I charge you," said he to them, "to fire upon every one that runs away, and even to kill me, should I be so cowardly as to fly." From thence he returned to the vanguard, and rallied his troops in person, assisted by the princes Menzikoff and Gallitsin. Löwenhaupt, who had received strict orders to rejoin his master, chose rather to continue his march than renew the battle, imagining he had done enough to prevent the enemy from pursuing him.

Next morning, about eleven o'clock, the czar attacked him near a morass, and extended his lines with a view to surrounding him. The Swedes faced about on all sides; and the battle was maintained for the space of two hours with equal courage and obstinacy. The loss of the Muscovites was three times greater than that of the Swedes; the former, however, still kept their ground, and the victory was left undecided.

At four in the afternoon General Bayer brought the czar a reinforcement of troops. The battle was then renewed for the third time with more fury and eagerness than ever, and lasted till night put an end to the combat. At last superior numbers prevailed, the Swedes were broken, routed and driven back to their baggage. Löwenhaupt rallied his troops behind the wagons. The Swedes were conquered, but disdained to fly. They were still about nine thousand in number, and not one Swedish soldier

deserted. The general drew them up with as much ease as if they had not been vanquished. The czar, on the other side, remained all night under arms; and forbade his officers, under pain of being cashiered, and his soldiers under pain of death, to leave their ranks for the sake of plunder.

Next morning at daybreak he ordered a fresh assault. Löwenhaupt had retired to an advantageous situation, at the distance of a few miles, after having spiked part of his cannon, and set fire to his wagons.

The Muscovites arrived in time to prevent the whole convoy from being consumed by the flames. They seized about six thousand wagons which they saved. The czar, desirous of completing the defeat of the Swedes, sent one of his generals, named Phlug, to attack them for the fifth time. That general offered them an honorable capitulation. Löwenhaupt refused it, and fought a fifth battle, as bloody as any of the former. Of the nine thousand soldiers he had left, he lost about one-half in this action, and the others remained unbroken. At last, night coming on, Löwenhaupt, after having sustained five battles against forty thousand men, passed the Sossa with about five thousand soldiers that remained. The czar lost about ten thousand men in these five engagements, in which he had the glory of conquering the Swedes, and Löwenhaupt that of disputing the victory for three days, and of effecting a retreat, without being obliged to surrender. Thus he arrived in his master's camp with the honor of having made such a noble de-

fence; but bringing with him neither ammunition nor an army.

By these means Charles found himself destitute of provisions, cut off from all communication with Poland, and surrounded by enemies, in the heart of a country where he had no resource but his own courage.

In this extremity, the memorable winter of 1709, which was still more terrible in those quarters of the world than in France, destroyed part of his army. Charles resolved to brave the seasons, as he had done his enemies; and ventured to make long marches with his troops during this mortal cold. It was in one of these marches that two thousand men fell dead from cold, before his eyes. The dragoons had no boots, and the foot soldiers were without shoes, and almost without clothes They were forced to make stockings of the skins of wild beasts, in the best manner they could. They were frequently in want of bread. They were obliged to throw almost all their cannon into the marshes and rivers, for want of horses to draw them; so that this army, which was once so fortunate, was reduced to twenty-four thousand men ready to perish with hunger. They no longer received any news from Sweden, nor were able to send any thither. In this condition only one officer complained. "What!" said the king to him, "Are you uneasy at being so far from your wife? If you are a good soldier, I will lead you to such a distance, that you shall hardly be able to receive news from Sweden once in three years."

The Marquis de Brancas, afterwards ambassador

in Sweden, told me, that a soldier ventured, in presence of the whole army, to present to the king, with an air of complaint, a piece of bread that was black and mouldy, made of barley and oats, which was the only food they then had, and of which they had not even a sufficient quantity. The king received the bit of bread without the least emotion, ate it, and then said coldly to the soldier: "It is not good, but it may be eaten." This incident, trifling as it is, if indeed anything that increases respect and confidence can be said to be trifling, contributed more than all the rest to make the Swedish army support those hardships which would have been intolerable under any other general.

While he was in this situation, he at last received a packet from Stockholm, by which he was informed of the death of his sister, the Duchess of Holstein who was carried off by the smallpox, in the month of December, 1708, in the twenty-seventh year of her age. She was a princess as mild and gentle as her brother was imperious in his disposition and implacable in his revenge. He had always entertained a great affection for her; and was the more afflicted by her death, that now beginning to taste of misfortunes himself, he had of course become the more susceptible of tender impressions.

By this packet he was likewise informed, that his people had raised money and troops, in obedience to orders; but nothing could reach his camp, as between him and Stockholm there were nearly five hundred leagues to travel, and an enemy superior in number to encounter.

The czar, who was as active as the King of

Sweden, after having sent some fresh troops to the assistance of the confederates in Poland, who under the command of General Siniawski, exerted their joint efforts against Stanislaus, immediately advanced into the Ukraine in the midst of this severe winter, to make head against his Swedish majesty. Then he continued to pursue the political scheme he had formed of weakening his enemy by petty rencounters, wisely judging that the Swedish army must in the end be entirely ruined, as it could not possibly be recruited. The cold must certainly have been very severe, as it obliged the two monarchs to agree to a suspension of arms. But on the first of February they renewed their military operations, in the midst of frost and snow.

After several slight skirmishes, and some losses, the king perceived in the month of April, that he had only eighteen thousand Swedes remaining. Mazeppa, the prince of the Cossacks, supplied them with provisions; without his assistance the army must have perished from want and hunger. At this conjuncture, the czar made proposals to Mazeppa for submitting again to his authority. But whether it was that the terrible punishment of the wheel, by which his friends had perished, made the Cossack apprehend the same danger for himself, or that he was desirous of avenging their death, he continued faithful to his new ally.

Charles, with his eighteen thousand Swedes, had neither laid aside the design nor the hope of penetrating to Moscow. Towards the end of May he laid siege to Poltava, upon the river Vorskla, at the eastern extremity of the Ukraine, and thirty

leagues from the Boristhenes. This country is inhabited by the Zaporavians, the most remarkable people in the universe. They are a collection of ancient Russians, Poles, and Tartars, professing a species of Christianity, and exercising a kind of freebooting, somewhat akin to that of the buccaneers. They choose a chief, whom they frequently depose or strangle. They allow no women to live among them; but they carry off all the children for twenty or thirty leagues around, and bring them up in their own manner. The summer they always pass in the open fields; in winter they shelter themselves in large barns, containing four or five thousand men. They fear nothing; they live free; they brave death for the smallest booty, with as much intrepidity as Charles XII. did, in order to obtain the power of bestowing crowns. The czar gave them sixty thousand florins, hoping by this means to engage them in his interest. They took his money; and, influenced by the powerful eloquence of Mazeppa, declared in favor of Charles XII., but their service was of very little consequence, as they think it the most egregious folly to fight for anything but plunder. It was no small advantage, however, that they were prevented from doing harm. The number of their troops was, at most, but about two thousand. One morning ten of their chiefs were presented to the king; but it was with great difficulty they could be prevailed upon to remain sober, as they commonly begin the day by getting drunk. They were brought to the intrenchments, where they showed their dexterity in firing with long carbines; for being placed upon the mounds, they

killed such of the enemy as they picked out at the distance of two hundred paces. To these banditti Charles added some thousands of Wallachians, whom he had hired from the Kam of Little Tartary; and thus laid siege to Poltava, with all these troops of Zaporavians, Cossacks, and Wallachians, which joined to his eighteen thousand Swedes, composed an army of about thirty thousand men; but an army in a wretched condition, and in want of everything. The czar had formed a magazine in Poltava. If the king should take it, he would open himself a way to Muscovy; and be able at least, amidst the great abundance he would then possess, to await the arrival of the succors which he still expected from Sweden, Livonia, Pomerania, and Poland. His only resource therefore being in the conquest of Poltava, he pressed the siege of it with great vigor. Mazeppa, who carried on a correspondence with some of the citizens, assured him that he would soon be master of it; and this assurance revived the hopes of the soldiers who considered the taking of Poltava as the end of all their miseries.

The king perceived, from the beginning of the siege, that he had taught his enemies the art of war. In spite of all his precautions, Prince Menzikoff threw some fresh troops into the town; by which means the garrison was rendered almost five thousand strong.

They made several sallies, and sometimes with success: they likewise sprung a mine; but what saved the town from being taken was the approach of the czar who was advancing with seventy thousand men. Charles went to reconnoitre them on

the twenty-seventh of May, which happened to be his birthday, and beat one of their detachments; but as he was returning to his camp, he received a shot from a carbine, which pierced his boot and shattered the bone of his heel. There was not the least alteration observable in his countenance, from which it could be suspected that he had received a wound. He continued to give his orders with great composure, and after this accident remained almost six hours on horseback. One of his domestics observing that the sole of the king's boot was bloody, made haste to call the surgeons; and the pain had now become so exquisite, that they were obliged to assist him in dismounting, and to carry him to his tent. The surgeons examined the wound, and were of opinion that the leg must be cut off, which threw the army into the utmost consternation. But one of the surgeons, named Neuman, who had more skill and courage than the rest, affirmed, that by making deep incisions he could save the king's leg. "Fall to work then presently," said the king to him: "cut boldly, and fear nothing." He himself held the leg with both his hands, and beheld the incisions that were made in it, as if the operation had been performed upon another person.

As they were laying on the dressing, he ordered an assault to be made the next morning; but he had hardly given these orders, when he was informed that the whole army of the enemy was advancing against him; in consequence of which he was obliged to alter his resolution. Charles, wounded and incapable of acting, saw himself

cooped up between the Boristhenes and the river that flows by Poltava, in a desert country, without any places of security, or ammunition, in the face of an army which at once cut off his retreat, and prevented his being supplied with provisions. In this extremity, he did not assemble a council of war as, considering the perplexed situation of his affairs, he ought to have done; but on the seventh or eighth of July, in the evening, he summoned Field-Marshal Renschild to his tent; and without deliberation, or the least discomfiture, ordered him to make the necessary dispositions for attacking the czar next day. Renschild made no objections, and went to carry his orders into execution. At the door of the king's tent he met Count Piper with whom he had long lived on very bad terms, as frequently happens between the minister and the general. Piper asked him if he had any news. "No," said the general coldly, and passed on to give his orders. As soon as Count Piper had entered the tent; "Has Renschild told you nothing?" said the king: "Nothing," replied Piper: "Well, then," resumed he, "I tell you that we shall give battle to-morrow." Count Piper was astonished at such a desperate resolution; but well knowing that it was impossible to make his master change his mind, he expressed his surprise only by his silence, and left Charles to sleep till break of day.

It was on the eighth of July, 1709, that the decisive battle of Poltava was fought between the two most famous monarchs that were then in the world. Charles XII. illustrious for nine years of victories; Peter Alexiowitz for nine years of pains taken to

form troops equal to those of Sweden: the one glorious for having given away dominions; the other for having civilized his own; Charles, fond of dangers, and fighting for glory alone: Alexiowitz scorning to fly from danger, and never making war but from interested views: the Swedish monarch liberal from an innate greatness of soul*; the Muscovite never granting favors but in order to serve some particular purpose: the former a prince of uncommon sobriety and continence, naturally magnanimous, and never cruel but once; the latter having not yet worn off the roughness of his education, or the barbarity of his country, as much the object of terror to his subjects as of admiration to strangers, and too prone to excesses, which even shortened his days. Charles had the title of "Invincible," of which a single moment might deprive him; the neighboring nations had already given Peter Alexiowitz the name of "Great"; which, as he did not owe it to his victories, he could not forfeit by a defeat.

In order to form a distinct idea of this battle and the place where it was fought, we must figure

* We cannot perceive the least tincture of liberality or greatness of soul in Charles. He might indeed have made himself King of Poland by dint of violence; but the consequence of that violence would have prevented him from gratifying his revenge, which seems to have been the predominant passion of his soul. Had he ascended the throne of Poland, he must have maintained an army of Swedes in that kingdom, consequently he could not have advanced to the banks of the Boristhenes in pursuit of Peter Alexiowitz. We find in Charles an insensibility to danger, a contempt of wealth, a clownishness of manners, a brutality of disposition, an implacable thirst for revenge and dominion; without taste, sentiment, or humanity.—Translator's Note.

to ourselves Poltava on the north, the camp of the King of Sweden on the south, stretching a little towards the east, his baggage about a mile behind him, and the river Poltava on the north of the town, running from east to west.

The czar had passed the river about a league from Poltava, towards the west, and was beginning to form his camp.

At break of day the Swedes appeared before the trenches with four iron cannons for their whole artillery; the rest were left in the camp, with about three thousand men, and four thousand remained with the baggage; so that the Swedish army which advanced against the enemy, consisted of about one and twenty thousand men, of which about sixteen thousand only were regular troops.

The generals Renschild, Roos, Löwenhaupt, Slipenbak, Horn, Sparre, Hamilton, the Prince of Würtemberg, the king's relative, and some others who had been present at the battle of Narva, put the subaltern officers in mind of that day, when eight thousand Swedes defeated an army of eighty thousand Muscovites in their intrenchments. The officers exhorted the soldiers by the same motive, and as they advanced they all encouraged one another.

Charles, carried in a litter at the head of his infantry, conducted the march. A party of horse advanced by his orders to attack that of the enemy; and the battle began with this engagement at half past four in the morning. The enemy's horse was posted towards the west, on the right side of the Russian camp. Prince Menzikoff and Count Go-

lovkin had placed them at intervals between redoubts lined with cannon. General Slipenbak, at the head of the Swedes, rushed upon them. All those who have served in the Swedish armies are sensible that it is almost impossible to withstand the fury of their first attack. The Muscovite squadrons were broken and routed. The czar ran up to rally them in person; his hat was pierced by a musket-ball; Menzikoff had three horses killed under him; and the Swedes cried out, "Victory."

Charles did not doubt that the battle was gained. About midnight he had sent General Creuts with five thousand horse or dragoons to take the enemy in flank, while he attacked them in front; but as his ill-fortune would have it, Creuts mistook his way, and did not make his appearance. The czar, who thought he was ruined, had time to rally his cavalry, and in his turn fell upon that of the king, which, not being supported by the detachment of Creuts, was likewise broken. Slipenbak was taken prisoner in this engagement. At the same time seventy-two pieces of cannon played from the camp upon the cavalry; and the Russian foot opening their lines, advanced to attack Charles's infantry.

After this the czar detached Prince Menzikoff to go and take post between Poltava and the Swedes. Prince Menzikoff executed his master's orders with dexterity and expedition. He not only cut off the communication between the Swedish army and the camp before Poltava; but having fallen in with a corps de réserve, he surrounded it and cut it to pieces. If Menzikoff performed this exploit of his

own accord, Russia is indebted to him for its preservation; if it was by the orders of the czar, he was an adversary worthy of Charles XII. Meanwhile the Russian infantry came out of their lines, and advanced into the plain in order of battle. On the other hand, the Swedish cavalry rallied within a quarter of a league from the enemy; and the king, assisted by Field-Marshal Renschild, made the necessary dispositions for a general engagement.

He ranged the few troops that were left him in two lines, his infantry occupying the centre and his cavalry forming the two wings. The czar disposed his army in the same manner. He had the advantage of numbers, and of seventy-two pieces of cannon, while the Swedes had no more than four to oppose him, and began to be in want of powder.

The Emperor of Muscovy was in the centre of his army, having then only the title of major-general, and seemed to obey General Czermetoff. But he rode from rank to rank in the character of emperor, mounted on a Turkish horse which had been given him as a present by the Grand Seignior, animating the captains and soldiers, and promising rewards to them all.

At nine in the morning the battle was renewed. One of the first discharges of the Russian cannon killed the two horses which bore Charles's litter. He caused two others to be put to it immediately. A second discharge broke the litter in pieces, and overturned the king. Of twenty-four body-guards, who mutually relieved each other in carrying him, one and twenty were killed. The Swedes, struck

with consternation, began to stagger; and the cannon of the enemy continuing to mow them down, the first line fell back upon the second, and the second began to fly. In this last action it was only a single line of ten thousand Russian infantry that routed the Swedish army: so much were matters changed!

All the Swedish writers allege that the Swedish troops would have gained the battle if they had not committed several blunders; but all the officers affirm that it was a great blunder to give battle at all, and a greater still to shut themselves up in a desert country, against the advice of the most prudent generals, in opposition to a warlike enemy three times stronger than Charles's forces, both in number of men and in the many resources from which the Swedes were entirely cut off. The remembrance of Narva was the chief cause of Charles's misfortune at Poltava.

The Prince of Würtemberg, General Renschild, and several principal offcers were already made prisoners; the camp before Poltava was stormed; and all was thrown into a confusion which it was impossible to rectify. Count Piper, with some officers of the chancery, had left the camp, and knew neither what to do nor what had become of the king; but ran about from one corner of the field to another. A major, called Bere, offered to conduct them to the baggage; but the clouds of dust and smoke which covered the plain, and the confusion of mind so natural amidst such a desolation, brought them straight to the counterscarp of the

town, where they were all made prisoners by the garrison.

The king scorned to fly, and yet was unable to defend himself. General Poniatowski happened to be near him at that instant. He was a colonel of Stanislaus's Swedish guards, a man of extraordinary merit, and had been induced, from his strong attachment to the person of Charles, to follow him into the Ukraine, without any post in the army. He was a man who, in all the occurrences of life and amidst those dangers when others would at most have displayed their courage, always took his measures with despatch, prudence and success. He made a sign to two body-guards, who took the king under the arm, and placed him on his horse, notwithstanding the exquisite pain of his wounds.

Poniatowski, though he had no command in the army, became on this occasion a general through necessity, and drew up five hundred horse near the king's person; some of them guards, others officers, and a few private troopers. This body being assembled and animated by the misfortune of their prince, forced their way through more than ten Russian regiments, and conducted Charles through the midst of the enemy for the space of a league, to the baggage of the Swedish army.

Charles, being closely pursued in his flight, had his horse killed under him; and Colonel Gieta, though wounded and weak from loss of blood, gave him his. Thus in the course of the flight they twice put this conqueror on horseback, though he had not been able to mount a horse during the engagement.

This surprising retreat was of great consequence in such distressful circumstances; but he was obliged to fly to a still greater distance. They found Count Piper's coach among the baggage; for the king had never used one since he left Stockholm: they put him into this vehicle, and fled towards the Boristhenes with great precipitation. The king who, from the time of his being set on horseback till his arrival at the baggage, had not spoken a single word, at length inquired, what had become of Count Piper. They told him he was taken prisoner, with all the officers of the chancery. "And General Renschild and the Duke of Würtemberg?" added the king. "Yes," says Poniatowski. "Prisoners of the Russians!" resumed Charles, shrugging his shoulders; "Come then, let us rather go to the Turks." They could not perceive, however, the least mark of dejection in his countenance; and whoever had seen him at that time without knowing his situation, would never have suspected that he was conquered and wounded.

While he was getting off, the Russians seized his artillery in the camp before Poltava, his baggage, and his military-chest, in which they found six millions in specie, the spoils of Poland and Saxony. Nine thousand men, partly Swedes and partly Cossacks, were killed in the battle, and about six thousand taken prisoners. There still remained about fifteen thousand men, including the Swedes, Poles, and Cossacks, who fled towards the Boristhenes, under the conduct of General Löwenhaupt. He marched one way with these fugitive troops; and the king took another road with some of his horse.

The coach in which he rode broke down by the way, and they again set him on horseback: and, to complete his misfortune, he wandered all night in a wood where, his courage being no longer able to support his exhausted spirits, the pain of his wound becoming more intolerable through fatigue, and his horse falling under him through excessive weariness, he lay some hours at the foot of a tree, in danger of being surprised every moment by the conquerors who were searching for him on all sides.

At last, on the 9th or 10th of July, at night, he found himself on the banks of the Boristhenes. Löwenhaupt had just arrived with the shattered remains of the army. It was with an equal mixture of joy and sorrow that the Swedes again beheld their king whom they thought to be dead. The enemy was approaching. The Swedes had neither a bridge to pass the river, nor time to make one, nor powder with which to defend themselves, nor provisions to support an army which had eaten nothing for two days. But the remains of this army were Swedes, and the conquered king was Charles XII. Most of the officers imagined that they were to halt there for the Russians, without flinching; and that they would either conquer or die on the banks of the Boristhenes. Charles would undoubtedly have taken this resolution, had he not been exhausted with weakness. His wound had now come to a suppuration, attended with a fever; and it has been remarked that men of the greatest intrepidity, when seized with the fever that is common in a suppuration, lose that impulse to valor, which, like all other virtues, requires the direction of a clear head.

Charles was no longer himself. This, at least, is what I have been well assured of, and what indeed is extremely probable. They carried him along like a sick person in a state of insensibility. Happily there was still left a sorry calash which by chance they had brought along with them: this they put on board of a little boat; and the king and General Mazeppa embarked in another. The latter had saved several coffers full of money; but the current being rapid, and a violent wind beginning to blow, the Cossack threw more than three-fourths of his treasures into the river to lighten the boat. Mullern, the king's chancellor, and Count Poniatowski, a man more necessary to the king than ever, on account of his admirable dexterity in finding expedients for all difficulties, crossed over in other barks with some officers. Three hundred troopers of the king's guard, and a great number of Poles and Cossacks, trusting to the goodness of their horses, ventured to pass the river by swimming. Their troop keeping close together, resisted the current, and broke the waves; but all those who attempted to pass separately, a little below, were carried down by the stream, and sunk in the river. Of all the foot who attempted to pass, there was not a single man that reached the other side.

While the shattered remains of the army were in this extremity, Prince Menzikoff came up with ten thousand horsemen, having each a foot-soldier behind him. The bodies of the Swedes who had died by the way, of their wounds, fatigue, and hunger, showed Prince Menzikoff but too plainly the road which the fugitive army had taken. The

prince sent a trumpeter to the Swedish general, to offer him a capitulation. Four general officers were presently despatched by Löwenhaupt to receive the commands of the conqueror. Before that day, sixteen thousand soldiers of King Charles would have attacked the whole forces of the Russian Empire, and would have perished to a man rather than surrender. But after the loss of a battle, and a flight of two days, deprived of the presence of their prince who was himself constrained to fly, the strength of every soldier being exhausted, and their courage no longer supported by the least prospect of relief, the love of life overcame their natural intrepidity. Colonel Troutfetre alone, observing the Muscovites' approach, began to advance with one Swedish battalion to attack them, hoping by this means to induce the rest of the troops to follow his example. But Löwenhaupt was obliged to oppose this unavailing ardor. The capitulation was settled, and the whole army were made prisoners of war. Some soldiers, reduced to despair at the thoughts of falling into the hands of the Muscovites, threw themselves into the Boristhenes. Two officers of the regiment commanded by the brave Troutfetre, killed each other, and the rest were made slaves. They all filed off in presence of Prince Menzikoff, laying their arms at his feet, as thirty thousand Muscovites had done nine years before to the King of Sweden, at Narva. But whereas the king sent back all the Russians, whom he did not fear, the czar retained the Swedes that were taken at Poltava.

These unhappy creatures were afterwards dispersed through the czar's dominions, particularly

in Siberia, a vast province of Great Tartary, which extends eastward to the frontiers of the Chinese Empire. In this barbarous country, where the use of bread was unknown, the Swedes, who had become ingenious through necessity, exercised the trades and employments of which they had the least notion. All the distinctions which fortune makes among men were there banished. The officer, who could not follow any trade, was obliged to cleave and carry wood for the soldier, now turned tailor, clothier, joiner, mason, or goldsmith, and who got a subsistence by his labor. Some of the officers became painters, and others architects. Some of them taught the languages and mathematics. They even established some public schools, which in time became so useful and famous, that the citizens of Moscow sent their children thither for education.

Count Piper, the King of Sweden's first minister, was for a long time confined in prison at St. Petersburg. The czar was persuaded, as well as the rest of Europe, that this minister had sold his master to the Duke of Marlborough, and drawn on Muscovy the arms of Sweden, which might have given peace to Europe; for which reason he rendered his confinement the more severe. Piper died in Muscovy a few years after, little assisted by his own family which lived in opulence at Stockholm, and vainly lamented by his sovereign who would never condescend to offer a ransom for his minister because he feared the czar would not accept it, as no cartel of exchange had ever been settled between them.

The Emperor of Muscovy, elated with a joy

which he took no pains to conceal, received upon the field of battle the prisoners whom they brought to him in crowds; and asked every moment "Where then is my brother Charles?"

He did the Swedish generals the honor of inviting them to dine with him. Among other questions which he put to them, he asked General Renschild what might be the number of his master's troops before the battle? Renschild answered that the king always kept the muster-roll himself, and would never show it to any one; but that, for his own part, he imagined the whole might be about thirty thousand, of which eighteen thousand were Swedes, and the rest Cossacks. The czar seemed to be surprised, and asked how they durst venture to penetrate into so distant a country, and lay siege to Poltava with such a handful of men? "We were not always consulted," replied the Swedish general; "but, like faithful servants, we obeyed our master's orders, without ever presuming to contradict them." The czar, upon receiving this answer, turned to some of his courtiers who were formerly suspected of having engaged in a conspiracy against him: "Ah!" says he, "see how a king should be served;" and then taking a glass of wine, "To the health," says he, "of my masters in the art of war." Renschild asked him who were the persons he honored with so high a title? "You, gentlemen, the Swedish generals," replied the czar. "Your majesty then," resumed the count, "is very ungrateful to treat your masters with so much severity." After dinner the czar caused their swords to be restored to all the general officers, and behaved to

them like a prince who had a mind to give his subjects a lesson in generosity and politeness, with which he was well acquainted. But this prince, who treated the Swedish generals with so much humanity, caused all the Cossacks that fell into his hands to be broken upon the wheel.

Thus the Swedish army, which left Saxony in such a triumphant manner, was now no more. One-half of them had perished with hunger, and the other half were either massacred or made slaves. Charles XII. had lost in one day the fruit of nine years' labor, and of almost a hundred battles. He made his escape in a wretched calash, attended by Major-General Hord, who was dangerously wounded. The rest of his little troop followed, some on foot, some on horseback, and others in wagons, through a desert where neither huts, tents, men, beasts, nor roads were to be seen. Everything was wanting, even to water itself. It was now the beginning of July; the country lay in the forty-seventh degree of latitude; the dry sand of the desert rendered the heat of the sun the more insupportable; the horses fell by the way; and the men were ready to die of thirst. A muddy brook which they found towards evening was the only water they came across; they filled some bottles with this water which saved the lives of the king's little troop. After a march of five days, he at last found himself on the banks of the river Hippanis, now called Bogh by the barbarians who have spoiled not only the general face, but even the very names of those countries which once flourished so nobly in the possession of the Greek

colonies. This river joins the Boristhenes some miles lower, and through it flows into the Black Sea. On the other side of the Bogh, towards the south, stands the little town of Oczakou, on the frontier of the Turkish Empire. The inhabitants seeing a body of soldiers approach, to whose dress and language they were entire strangers, refused to carry them over the river, without an order from Mehemet Pasha, governor of Oczakou. The king sent an express to the governor, demanding a passage; but the Turk not knowing what to do, in a country where one false step frequently costs a man his life, durst not venture to take anything upon himself, without having first obtained permission of the serasquier of the province, who resides at Bender in Bessarabia. While they were waiting for this permission, the Russians who had made the king's army prisoners had crossed the Boristhenes, and were approaching to take him also. At last the Pasha of Oczakou sent word to the king, that he would furnish him with one small boat, to transport himself and two or three of his attendants. In this extremity the Swedes took by force what they could not obtain by gentle means: some of them went over to the farther side in a small skiff, seized on some boats, and brought them to the hither bank of the river. And happy was it for them that they did so; for the masters of the Turkish barks, fearing they should lose such a favorable opportunity of getting a good freight, came in crowds to offer their services. At that instant arrived the favorable answer of the serasquier of Bender; and the king had the mortification of seeing five hundred of

his men seized by the enemy whose insulting bravadoes he even heard. The Pasha of Oczakou, by means of an interpreter, asked his pardon for the delays which had occasioned the loss of these five hundred men, and humbly entreated him not to complain of it to the Grand Seignior. Charles promised him that he would not; but at the same time gave him a severe reprimand, as if he had been speaking to one of his own subjects.

The commander of Bender who was likewise serasquier, a title which answers to that of general, and pasha of the province, which signifies governor and intendant, forthwith sent an aga to compliment the king, and to offer him a magnificent tent, with provision, baggage, wagons, and all the conveniences, officers, and attendants necessary to conduct him to Bender in a splendid manner; for it is the custom of the Turks, not only to defray the charges of ambassadors to the place of their residence, but likewise to supply, with great liberality, the necessities of those princes who take refuge among them, during the time of their stay.

CHAPTER V.

State of the Ottoman Porte. Charles resides near Bender: His employments: His intrigues at the Porte: His Designs. Augustus restored to his throne. The King of Denmark makes a descent upon Sweden. All the other dominions of Charles are invaded. The czar enters Moscow in triumph. Affair of Pruth. History of the Czarina who from a country-girl became Empress.

ACHMET III. was at that time emperor of the Turks. He had been placed upon the throne in 1703, by a revolution not unlike that which transferred the crown of England from James II. to his son-in-law William. Mustapha being governed by his mufti, who was hated by all the Turks, provoked the whole empire to rise against him. His army, by the assistance of which he hoped to punish the malcontents, went over to the rebels. He was seized, and deposed in form: and his brother was taken from the seraglio and advanced to the throne, almost without spilling a single drop of blood. Achmet shut up the deposed sultan in the seraglio at Constantinople, where he lived for several years, to the great astonishment of Turkey, which had been wont to see the dethronement of her princes always followed by their death.

The new sultan, as the only recompense for a crown which he owed to the ministers, to the generals, to the officers of the janissaries, and in a word to those who had had any hand in the revolution,

put them all to death, one after another, for fear they would one day attempt a second revolution. By sacrificing so many brave men, he weakened the strength of the nation; but established his throne, at least for some years. The next object of his attention was to amass riches. He was the first of the Ottoman race who ventured to make a small alteration in the current coin, and to impose new taxes; but he was obliged to drop both these enterprises, for fear of an insurrection. The rapacity and tyranny of the Grand Seignior are seldom felt by any but the officers of the empire, who, whatever they may be in other respects, are domestic slaves to the sultan; but the rest of the Mussulmans live in profound tranquillity, secure of their liberty, their lives, and fortunes.

Such was the Turkish emperor to whom the King of Sweden fled for refuge. As soon as he set foot on the sultan's territories, he wrote him a letter which bears date the 13th of July, 1709. Several copies of this letter were spread abroad, all of which are now held to be spurious; but of all those I have seen, there is not one that does not sufficiently mark the natural haughtiness of the author, and is more suited to his courage than to his condition. The sultan did not return him an answer till towards the end of September. The pride of the Ottoman Porte made Charles sensible what a mighty difference there was between a Turkish emperor and a king of part of Scandinavia, a conquered and fugitive Christian. For the rest, all these letters, which kings seldom write themselves, are but vain formal-

ities, which serve neither to discover the characters of princes, nor the state of their affairs.

Though Charles XII. was in reality no better than a prisoner honorably treated in Turkey, he yet formed the design of arming the Ottoman Empire against his enemies. He flattered himself that he would be able to reduce Poland under the yoke, and subdue Russia. He had an envoy at Constantinople; but the person that served him most effectually in his vast projects, was the Count de Poniatowski, who went to Constantinople without a commission, and soon rendered himself necessary to the king, agreeable to the Porte, and at last dangerous even to the grand viziers.*

One of those who seconded his designs with the greatest activity, was the physician Fonseca, a Portuguese Jew, settled at Constantinople, a man of knowledge and address, well qualified for the management of business, and perhaps the only philosopher of his nation. His profession procured him free access to the Ottoman Porte, and frequently gained him the confidence of the viziers. With this gentleman I was very well acquainted at Paris; and all the particulars I am going to relate were, he assured me, unquestionable truths. Count Poniatowski has informed me, both by letters and by word of mouth, that he had the address to convey some letters to the sultaness, Valide, the mother of the reigning emperor, who had formerly been ill-used by her son, but now began to recover her

* It was from this nobleman I received not only the remarks which have been published, and of which the chaplain Norberg has made use, but likewise several other manuscripts relating to this history.

influence in the seraglio. A Jewess who was often admitted to this princess, was perpetually recounting to her the exploits of the King of Sweden, and charmed her ear by these relations. The sultaness, moved by that secret inclination with which most women feel themselves inspired in favor of extraordinary men, even without having seen them, openly espoused the king's cause in the seraglio. She called him by no other name than that of her lion and she sometimes would say to the sultan, her son, "when will you help my lion to devour this czar?" She even dispensed with the rules of the seraglio, so far as to write several letters with her own hand to Count Poniatowski, in whose custody they are still at the time of my writing this history.

Meanwhile the king was honorably conducted to Bender, through the desert that was formerly called the wilderness of the Getæ. The Turks took care that nothing should be wanting on the road, to render his journey agreeable. A great many Poles, Swedes, and Cossacks, who had escaped from the Muscovites, came by different ways to increase his train on the road. By the time he reached Bender he had eighteen hundred men who were all maintained and lodged, as well as their horses, at the expense of the Grand Seignior.

The king chose to encamp near Bender rather than lodge in the town. The serasquier Jussuf pasha caused a magnificent tent to be erected for him; and tents were likewise provided for all the lords of his retinue. Some time after, Charles built a house in this place; the officers followed his example; and the soldiers raised barracks; so that

his camp insensibly became a little town. As the king was not yet cured of his wound, he was obliged to have a carious bone extracted from his foot. But as soon as he could mount a horse, he resumed his wonted labors, always rising before the sun, tiring three horses a day, and exercising his soldiers. By way of amusement, he sometimes played at chess; and, as the characters of men are often discovered by the most trifling incidents, it may not be improper to observe, that he always advanced the king first at that game, and made greater use of him than of any of the other men; by which he was always a loser.

At Bender he had all the necessities of life in great abundance, a felicity that seldom falls to the lot of a conquered and fugitive prince; for besides the more than sufficient quantity of provisions, and the five hundred crowns a day, which he received from the Ottoman munificence, he drew some money from France, and borrowed of the merchants at Constantinople. Part of this money was employed in forwarding his intrigues in the seraglio, in buying the favor of the viziers, or procuring their ruin. The rest he squandered with great profusion among his own officers and the janissaries who composed his guards at Bender. The dispenser of these acts of liberality was Grothusen, his favorite, a man who, contrary to the custom of persons in that station, was as fond of giving as his master. He once brought him an account of sixty thousand crowns in two lines: Ten thousand crowns given to the Swedes and janissaries by the generous orders of his majesty, and the rest eaten up by

myself: "It is thus," says the king, "that I would have my friends give in their accounts. Mullern makes me read whole pages for the sum of ten thousand livres. I like the laconic style of Grothusen much better." One of his old officers, who was suspected of being somewhat covetous, complained that his majesty gave all to Grothusen: "I give money," replies the king, "to none but those who know how to use it." This generosity frequently reduced him to such a low ebb, that he had not wherewithal to give. A better economy in his acts of generosity would have been as much to his honor, and more to his interest; but it was the failing of this prince to carry all the virtues beyond due bounds.

Great numbers of strangers went from Constantinople to see him. The Turks and the neighboring Tartars came thither in crowds: all respected and admired him. His inflexible resolution to abstain from wine, and his regularity in assisting twice a day at public prayers, made them say that he was a true Mussulman, and inspired them with an ardent desire of marching along with him to the conquest of Muscovy.

During his abode at Bender, which was much longer than he expected, he insensibly acquired a taste for reading. Baron Fabricius, a gentleman of the bedchamber to the Duke of Holstein, a young man of an amiable character, who possessed that gayety of temper and easy turn of wit, which is so agreeable to princes, was the person who engaged him in these literary amusements. He had been sent to reside with him at Bender in the char-

acter of envoy, to take care of the interests of the young Duke of Holstein; and he succeeded in his negotiations by his open and agreeable behavior. He had read all the best French authors. He persuaded the king to read the tragedies of Pierre Corneille, those of Racine, and the works of Despréaux. The king had no relish for the satires of the last author, which indeed are far from being his best pieces; but he was very fond of his other writings. When he read that passage of the eighth satire, where the author treats Alexander as a fool and a madman, he tore out the leaf.

Of all the French tragedies, "*Mithridate*" pleased him most, because the situation of that monarch who, though vanquished, still breathed vengeance, was so familiar to his own. He showed M. Fabricius the passages that struck him; but would never read any of them aloud, nor ever hazard a single word in French. Nay, when he afterwards saw M. Desaleurs, the French ambassador at the port, a man of distinguished merit, but acquainted only with his mother tongue, he answered him in Latin; and when M. Desaleurs protested that he did not understand four words of that language, the king, rather than talk French, sent for an interpreter.

Such were the occupations of Charles XII. at Bender, where he waited till a Turkish army should come to his assistance. His envoy presented memorials in his name to the grand vizier; and Poniatowski supported them with all his interest. This gentleman's address succeeded in everything; he was always dressed in the Turkish fashion, and he had free access to every place. The Grand Seignior

presented him with a purse of a thousand ducats, and the grand vizier said to him, "I will take your king in one hand, and a sword in the other; I will lead him to Moscow at the head of two hundred thousand men." The name of this grand vizier was Chourlouli Ali pasha; he was the son of a peasant of the village of Chourlou. Such an extraction is not reckoned a disgrace among the Turks who have no ranks of nobility, neither that which is annexed to certain employments, nor that which consists in titles. With them the dignity and importance of a man's character depends entirely upon his personal services. This is a custom which prevails in most of the eastern countries; a custom extremely natural and one which might be productive of the most beneficial effects, if posts of honor were conferred on none but men of merit; but the viziers for the most part are no better than the creatures of a black eunuch, or a favorite female slave.

The first minister soon changed his mind. The king could do nothing but negotiate, and the czar could give money, which he distributed with great profusion; and he even employed the money of Charles XII. on this occasion. The military chest which he took at Poltava furnished him with new arms against the vanquished king; and it was no longer the question at court, whether war should be made upon the Russians. The interest of the czar was all powerful at the Porte, which granted such honors to his envoy as the Muscovite ministers had never before enjoyed at Constantinople. They allowed him to have a seraglio, that is, a palace in the quarter of the Franks, who converse with

the foreign ministers. The czar thought he might even demand that General Mazeppa should be put into his hands, as Charles XII. had caused the unhappy Patkul to be delivered up to him. Chourlouli Ali pasha could refuse nothing to a prince who backed his demands with millions. Thus that same grand vizier, who had formerly promised in the most solemn manner to lead the King of Sweden into Muscovy with two hundred thousand men, had the assurance to make him a proposal of consenting to sacrifice General Mazeppa. Charles was enraged at this demand. It is hard to say how far the vizier might have pushed the affair, had not Mazeppa, who was now seventy years of age, died exactly at this juncture. The king's grief and indignation were greatly increased, when he understood that Tolstoi who had now become the czar's ambassador at the Porte, was served in public by the Swedes that had been made slaves at Poltava, and that the brave soldiers were daily sold in the market at Constantinople. Nay, the Russian ambassador made no scruple of declaring openly, that the Mussulman troops at Bender were placed there rather with a view to secure the king's person, than to do him any honor.

Charles, abandoned by the grand vizier, and vanquished by the czar's money in Turkey, as he had been by his arms in the Ukraine, saw himself deceived and despised by the Porte, and almost a prisoner among the Tartars. His attendants began to despair. He alone remained firm, and never appeared in the least dejected. Convinced that the sultan was ignorant of the intrigues of Chourlouli

Ali, his grand vizier, he resolved to acquaint him with them; and Poniatowski undertook the execution of this hazardous enterprise. The Grand Seignior goes every Friday to the mosque, surrounded by his solaks, a kind of guard, whose turbans are adorned with such high feathers as to conceal the sultan from the view of the people. When any one has a petition to present to the Grand Seignior, he endeavors to mingle with the guards, and holds the petition aloft. Sometimes the sultan condescends to receive it himself; but for the most part he orders an aga to take charge of it, and upon his return from the mosque causes the petition to be laid before him. There is no fear of any one's daring to importune him with useless memorials and trifling petitions, inasmuch as they write less at Constantinople in a whole year than they do at Paris in one day. There is still less danger of any memorials being presented against the ministers, to whom he commonly sends them unread. Poniatowski had no other way of conveying the King of Sweden's complaint to the Grand Seignior. He drew up a heavy charge against the grand vizier. M. de Feriol, who was then the French ambassador, and who gave me an account of the whole affair, had the memorial translated into the Turkish tongue. A Greek was hired to present it: this Greek mingling with the guards of the Grand Seignior, held the paper so high for such a long time, and made so much noise, that the sultan observed him and took the memorial himself.

This method of presenting memorials to the sultan against his viziers was frequently employed.

A Swede, called Leloing, gave in another petition a few days after. Thus in the Turkish Empire Charles XII. was reduced to the necessity of using the same expedients as an oppressed subject.

Some days after this, the sultan sent the King of Sweden, as the only answer to his complaints, five and twenty Arabian horses, one of which had carried his highness and was covered with a saddle and housing enriched with precious stones, with stirrups of massy gold. This present was accompanied by an obliging letter, but conceived in general terms such as gave reason to suspect that the minister had done nothing without the sultan's consent. Chourlouli, too, who was a perfect master of the art of dissimulation, sent the king five very curious horses. But Charles, with a lofty air, said to the person that brought them: "Go back to your master, and tell him that I don't receive presents from my enemies."

Poniatowski, having already ventured to present a petition against the grand vizier, next formed the bold design of deposing him. Understanding that the vizier was disagreeable to the sultaness mother, and that he was hated by Kislar Aga, the chief of the black eunuchs, and by the aga of the janissaries, he prompted them all three to speak against him. It was something very surprising to see a Christian, a Pole, and uncommissioned agent of the King of Sweden, who had taken refuge among the Turks, caballing almost openly at the Porte against a viceroy of the Ottoman Empire who, at the same time, was both an able minister and a favorite of his master. Poniatowski could never have succeeded, and

the bare attempt would have cost him his life, had not a power superior to all those that operated in his favor given a finishing stroke to the fortune of the grand vizier Chourlouli.

The sultan had a young favorite, who afterwards governed the Ottoman Empire, and was killed in Hungary in 1716, at the battle of Peterwardein, which Prince Eugene of Savoy gained over the Turks. His name was Coumourgi Ali pasha; his birth was much the same as that of Chourlouli; being the son of a coal-heaver, as Coumourgi imports, Coumour in the Turkish tongue signifying coal. The emperor, Achmet II., uncle of Achmet III. having met Coumourgi, while yet an infant, in a little wood near Adrianople, was struck with his extraordinary beauty, and caused him to be conducted to the seraglio. Mustapha, the eldest son and successor of Mahomet, was very fond of him; and Achmet III. made him his favorite. He had then no other place but that of selictar-aga, or sword-bearer to the crown. His extreme youth did not allow him to make any open pretensions to the post of grand vizier, and yet he had the ambition to aspire to it. The Swedish faction could never draw this favorite over to their side. He had never been a friend to Charles, or to any other Christian prince, or their ministers; but on this occasion he served King Charles XII. without intending to do so. He joined with the sultaness, Valide, and the great officers of the Porte, to hasten the ruin of Chourlouli who was equally hated by them all. This old minister, who had served his master for a long time, and with great fidelity, fell a victim to the

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caprice of a boy, and the intrigues of a foreigner. He was stripped of his dignity and riches. His wife, who was the daughter of the late sultan, Mustapha, was taken from him; and he was banished to Kaffa, formerly called Feodosia, in Crim Tartary. The bull, that is to say, the seal of the empire, was given to Numan Couprougli, grandson to the great Couprougli, who took Crete. This new vizier was, what ill-informed Christians can hardly believe it possible for a Turk to be, a man of incorruptible virtue, a scrupulous observer of the law, and one who frequently opposed the rigid rules of justice to the wayward will of the sultan. He could not endure to hear of a war against Muscovy, which he considered as unjust and unnecessary; but the same attachment to his law, that prevented his making war upon the czar, contrary to the faith of treaties, made him observe the rights of hospitality towards the King of Sweden, "The law forbids you," he would say to his master, "to attack the czar, who has done you no injury; but it commands you to succor the King of Sweden, who is an unfortunate prince in your dominions." He sent his majesty eight hundred purses (every purse containing five hundred crowns) and advised him to return peaceably to his own dominions. Either through the territories of the Emperor of Germany, or in some of the French vessels which then lay in the harbor of Constantinople, and which M. de Feriol, the French ambassador at the Porte, offered to Charles to conduct him to Marseilles. Count Poniatowski carried on his negotiations with greater activity than ever, and acquired a superiority with the incor-

ruptible vizier, which the gold of the Muscovites was unable to counterbalance. The Russian faction thought it would be their wisest course to poison such a dangerous negotiator. They gained one of his domestics, who was to give him the poison in a dish of coffee; but the crime was discovered before it was carried into execution. The poison was found in the hands of the domestic, contained in a small vial, which was carried to the Grand Seignior. The poisoner was tried in a full divan, and condemned to the galleys; the justice of the Turks never inflicting death for those crimes that have not been perpetrated.

Charles, who could not be persuaded but that, sooner or later, he would be able to engage the Turkish Empire in a war against Muscovy, rejected every proposal that was made for his peaceable return home. He was continually representing to the Turks the formidable power of that same czar, whom he had so long despised. His emissaries were perpetually insinuating that Peter Alexiowitz wanted to make himself master of the navigation of the Black Sea; and that after having subdued the Cossacks, he would carry his arms into Crim Tartary. Sometimes these representations aroused the Porte, at others the Russian ministers destroyed all their effect.

While Charles XII. made his fate depend upon the caprice of viziers, and while he was alternately receiving favors and affronts from a foreign power, presenting petitions to the sultan, and subsisting upon his bounty in a desert, all his enemies, awak-

ened from their former lethargy, invaded his dominions.

The battle of Poltava was the first signal for a revolution in Poland. Augustus returned to that country, protesting against his abdication and the peace of Altranstädt, and publicly accusing Charles XII., whom he no longer feared, of robbery and cruelty. He imprisoned Fingsten and Imhof, his plenipotentiaries, who had signed his abdication, as if in so doing they had exceeded their orders and betrayed their master. His Saxon troops, which had been the pretext of his dethronement, conducted him back to Warsaw, accompanied by most of the Polish palatines, who having formerly sworn fidelity to him, had afterwards done the same to Stanislaus, and had now come to do it again to Augustus. Siniawski himself rejoined his party, and laying aside the ambitious hopes of raising himself to the royal dignity, was content to remain grand-general of the crown. Flemming, his first minister, who had been obliged to leave Saxony, for fear of being delivered with Patkul, now contributed by his address to bring back to his master's interest a great part of the Polish nobility.

The pope absolved the people from the oath of allegiance which they had taken to Stanislaus. This step of the holy father, seasonably taken, and supported by the forces of Augustus, was of considerable weight. It strengthened the credit of the court of Rome in Poland, the natives of which had no inclination at that time to dispute with the sovereign pontiffs their chimerical right of interfering in the temporal concerns of princes. Every

one was ready to submit anew to the authority of Augustus, and willingly received an absolution which, however useless in itself, the nuncio took care to represent as absolutely necessary.

The power of Charles and the grandeur of Sweden, were now drawing towards their last period. Over ten crowned heads had long beheld with fear and envy the Swedish power extending itself far beyond its natural bounds, on the other side of the Baltic Sea, from the Danube to the Elbe. The fall of Charles, and his absence, revived the interested views, and rekindled the jealousies of all these princes, which had for a long time been kept asleep by treaties, and by their inability to break them.

The czar, who was more powerful than all of them put together, improving his late victory, took Viborg, and all Carelia, overran Finland, laid siege to Riga, and sent a body of forces into Poland to aid Augustus in recovering his throne. The czar was at that time what Charles had been formerly, the arbiter of Poland and the North; but all his measures were directed to the promotion of his own interest: whereas Charles had never been prompted by any other motives than those of revenge and glory. The Swedish monarch had succored his allies and crushed his enemies, without reaping any fruit from his victories. The czar behaving more like a prince, and less like a hero, would assist the King of Poland, only on condition that Livonia should be ceded to him; and that that province, for which Augustus had kindled the war,

should remain forever in the possession of the Muscovites.

The King of Denmark, forgetting the treaty of Travendal, as Augustus had that of Altranstädt, began to entertain thoughts of making himself master of the duchies of Holstein and Bremen, to which he renewed his pretensions. The King of Prussia had ancient claims upon Swedish Pomerania, which he now resolved to revive. The Duke of Mecklenburg was vexed to see that the Swedes were still in possession of Wismar, the finest town in the duchy. This prince was to marry a niece of the Russian emperor; and the czar wanted only a pretext for establishing himself in Germany, after the example of the Swedes. George, Elector of Hanover, was likewise desirous of enriching himself with Charles's spoils. The Bishop of Münster, too, would have been willing enough to avail himself of some of his claims, had he been able to support them.

Above twelve or thirteen thousand Swedes defended Pomerania, and the other countries which Charles possessed in Germany; and it was there that the war was most likely to begin. This storm alarmed the emperor and his allies. It is a law of the empire, that whoever invades one of its provinces shall be reputed an enemy to the whole Germanic body.

But there was a still greater difficulty. All these princes, except the czar, were then united against Louis XIV. whose power, for a long time, had been as formidable to the empire as that of Charles.

At the beginning of this century, Germany

found itself hard pressed from south to north by the armies of France and Sweden. The French had passed the Danube, and the Swedes the Oder, and had their forces, victorious as they then were, been joined together, the empire would have been utterly undone. But the same fatality that ruined Sweden had likewise humbled France. Sweden, however, had still some resources left; and Louis XIV. carried on the war with vigor, though without success. Should Pomerania and the duchy of Bremen become the theatre of the war, it was to be feared that the empire would suffer, and that being weakened on that side, it would be less able to withstand the arms of Louis XIV. To prevent this danger, the emperor, the princes of the empire, Anne, Queen of England, and the States-General of the United Provinces concluded at The Hague, about the end of the year 1709, one of the most singular treaties that ever was signed.

It was stipulated by these powers, that the war against the Swedes should not be in Pomerania, nor in any of the German provinces; and that the enemies of Charles XII. should be at liberty to attack him anywhere else. Even the czar and the King of Poland acceded to this treaty, in which they caused to be inserted an article as extraordinary as the treaty itself, viz.: that the twelve thousand Swedes who were in Pomerania should not be allowed to leave it in order to defend their other provinces.

To secure the execution of the treaty, and to maintain this imaginary neutrality, it was proposed to assemble an army, which should encamp

on the banks of the Oder. An unheard of novelty surely: to levy an army in order to prevent a war! Nay, the very princes who were to pay the army, were most of them concerned to commence the war which they thus affected to prevent. The treaty imported that the army should be composed of the troops of the emperor, of the King of Prussia, of the Elector of Hanover, of the Landgrave of Hesse, and of the Bishop of Münster.

The issue of this project was such as might naturally have been expected; it was not carried into execution. The princes who were to have furnished their contingents for completing the army, contributed nothing. There were not two regiments formed. Everybody talked of a neutrality, but nobody observed it; and the princes of the North, who had any quarrel with the King of Sweden, were left at full liberty to dispute with each other the spoils of that prince.

During these transactions, the czar having quartered his troops in Lithuania, and given orders for pushing the siege of Riga, returned to Moscow to show his people a sight as new as anything he had hitherto done in the kingdom. This was a triumph of nearly the same nature as that of the ancient Romans. He made his entry into Moscow on the first of January, 1710, under seven triumphant arches erected in the streets, and adorned with everything which the climate could furnish, or which a flourishing commerce (rendered such by his care) could import. The procession began with a regiment of guards, followed by the pieces of artillery taken from the Swedes at Lesno and Pol-

tava, each of which was drawn by eight horses covered with scarlet housings hanging down to the ground. Next came the standards, kettle-drums, and colors won at these two battles, carried by the officers and soldiers who had taken them. All these spoils were followed by the finest troops of the czar. After they had filed by, there appeared in a chariot, made on purpose, the litter of Charles XII. found in the field of battle at Poltava, all shattered with two cannon-shot. Behind the litter marched all the prisoners two by two, among whom was Count Piper, first minister of Sweden, the famous Marshal Renschild, the Count de Löwenhaupt, the generals Slipenbak, Stackelberg, and Hamilton, and all the officers who were afterwards dispersed through Great Russia. Immediately after these appeared the czar himself, mounted on the same horse which he rode at the battle of Poltava: a little after him came the generals who had had a share in the success of the day. Next followed a regiment of guards; and the whole was closed by the wagons loaded with the Swedish ammunition.

This grand procession was accompanied with the ringing of all the bells in Moscow and the sound of drums, kettle-drums, trumpets, and an infinite number of musical instruments which played in concert, together with the volleys of two hundred pieces of cannon, amidst the acclamations of five hundred thousand men who, at every stop the czar made in this triumphal entry, cried out: "Long live the emperor, our father."

This dazzling exhibition augmented the people's

veneration for his person, and perhaps made him appear greater in their eyes than all the solid advantages they had derived from his labors. Meanwhile he continued the blockade of Riga; and the generals made themselves masters of the rest of Livonia and part of Finland. At the same time the King of Denmark came with his whole fleet to make a descent upon Sweden, where he landed seventeen thousand men, and left them under the command of the Count de Reventlau.

Sweden was, at that time, governed by a regency, composed of some senators who were appointed by the king before he left Stockholm. The body of the senate, imagining that the government rightfully belonged to them, became jealous of the regency; and the state suffered by these divisions. But, when after the battle of Poltava, the first news was brought to Stockholm that the king was in Bender, at the mercy of the Turks and Tartars, and that the Danes had invaded Schonen, and taken the town of Helsingborg, all their jealousies immediately vanished, and they bent their whole attention towards the preservation of the kingdom. Sweden was now drained, in a great measure, of regular troops; for though Charles had always made his great expeditions at the head of small armies, yet the innumerable battles he had fought in the space of nine years, the necessity he was under of continually recruiting his forces and maintaining his garrisons, and the standing army he was constantly obliged to keep in Finland, Ingria, Livonia, Pomerania, Bremen, and Verden; all these particulars had cost Sweden, during the course of the war, above two

hundred and fifty thousand men; so that there were not eight thousand of the veteran troops remaining which, together with the newly raised militia, were the only resources to which Sweden had to trust for the defence of her territories.

The nation is naturally warlike; and all subjects insensibly imbibe the spirit of their sovereign. From one end of the country to the other nothing was talked of but the prodigious achievements of Charles and his generals, and of the old regiments they commanded at the Düna, at Narva, Klissow, Pultusk, and Hollosin. Hence the very lowest of the Swedes were fired with a spirit of emulation and glory; and this heroic impulse was greatly augmented by their affection for their king, their pity for his misfortunes, and their implacable hatred to the Danes. In several other countries the peasants are slaves, or treated as such; but here they compose a part of the state, are considered as citizens and, in consequence, are capable of more exalted sentiments; so that this newly raised militia became, in a short time, the best troops of the North.

General Stenbock, by order of the regency, put himself at the head of eight thousand of the veteran troops, and about twelve thousand of this new militia, to go in pursuit of the Danes who ravaged all the country about Helsingborg, and had already extorted contributions from some of the more inland provinces.

There was neither time nor opportunity to give regimental clothes to the new militia. Most of these boors came in their flaxen frocks, having

pistols tied to their girdles, with cords. Stenbock, at the head of this strange army, overtook the Danes about three leagues from Helsingborg on the 10th of March, 1710. He had designed to give his troops a few days' rest, to raise intrenchments, and to allow his new soldiers sufficient time to habituate themselves to the sight of the enemy; but all the peasants were called out for battle the very day on which they arrived.

I have been assured by some of the officers who were present, that they saw almost every individual soldier foaming with rage and choler; so great is the national hatred of the Swedes to the Danes. Stenbock availed himself of this ardor of spirit which, in the day of battle, is of as much consequence as military discipline. He attacked the Danes; and there one might have seen a thing, of which, perhaps, the whole history of mankind cannot furnish above two similar examples; the newly raised militia, in their first assault, equalled the intrepidity of veteran soldiers. Two regiments of these undisciplined peasants cut to pieces the regiment of the King of Denmark's guards, of which there remained alive only ten men.

The Danes, being entirely routed, retired under the cannon of Helsingborg. The passage from Sweden to Zealand is so short, that the King of Denmark received the news of the defeat of his army in Sweden the same day on which it happened; and sent his fleet to bring off the shattered remains of his army. The Danes quitted Sweden with precipitation five days after the battle; but unable to carry off their horses, and unwilling to leave

them to the enemy, they killed them all in the suburbs of Helsingborg, and set fire to their provisions, burning their corn and baggage, and leaving in Helsingborg four thousand wounded, the greater part of whom died of the infection occasioned by so many dead horses, and for want of provisions, of which even their countrymen deprived them, in order to prevent the Swedes from enjoying any share of it.

Meanwhile, the peasants of Dalecarlia having heard, in the heart of their forests, that their king was a prisoner among the Turks, sent a deputation to the regency of Stockholm, and offered to go at their own expense, to the number of twenty thousand men, to rescue their master from the hands of his enemies. This proposal which was better calculated to express their courage and loyalty than to produce any real advantage was received with pleasure, though it was not accepted; and the senators took care to acquaint the king with it at the same time that they sent him a circumstantial account of the battle of Helsingborg.

Charles received this agreeable news in his camp near Bender, in July, 1710. And another event that happened soon after contributed still more to strengthen his hopes.

The grand vizier, Couprougli, who opposed all his designs, was dismissed from his office, after having filled it for two months. The little court of Charles XII. and those who still adhered to him in Poland, gave out that Charles made and unmade the viziers, and governed the Turkish Empire from his retreat at Bender. But he had no hand in the

disgrace of that favorite. The rigid probity of the vizier was said to have been the sole cause of his fall. His predecessor had paid the janissaries not out of the imperial treasury, but with the money which he procured by extortion. Couprougli paid them out of the treasury. Achmet reproached him with preferring the interest of the subjects to that of the emperor: "Your predecessors," said he, "well knew how to find other means of paying my troops." "If," replied the grand vizier, "he had the art of enriching your highness by rapine, it is an art of which I am proud to say I am entirely ignorant."

The profound secrecy that prevails in the seraglio seldom allows such particulars to transpire to the public; but this fact was published along with Couprougli's disgrace. The vizier's boldness did not cost him his head because true virtue is sometimes respected even while it displeases. He was permitted to retire to the island of Negropont. These particulars I learned from the letters of M. Bru, my relation, first druggist at the Ottoman Porte, and I have retold them in order to display the true spirit of that government.

After this the Grand Seignior recalled from Aleppo Baltagi Mehemet, Pasha of Syria, who had been grand vizier before Chourlouli. The baltagis of the seraglio so called from balta, which signifies an axe, are slaves employed to cut wood for the use of the princes of the Ottoman blood, and the sultanas. This vizier had been a baltagi in his youth, and had ever since retained the name of that office, according to the custom of the Turks who

are not ashamed to take the name of their first profession, or of that of their father, or even of the place of their birth.

While Baltagi Mehemet was a valet in the seraglio, he was so happy as to render some little services to Prince Achmet, who was then a prisoner of state in the reign of his brother Mustapha. The princes of the Ottoman blood are allowed to keep for their pleasure a few women who are past the age of child-bearing, (and that age arrives very early in Turkey) but still agreeable enough to please. As soon as Achmet became sultan, he gave one of these female slaves, for whom he had had a great affection, in marriage to Baltagi Mehemet. This woman by her intrigues made her husband grand vizier; another intrigue displaced him; and a third made him grand vizier again.

When Baltagi Mehemet received the bull of the empire, he found the party of the King of Sweden prevailing in the seraglio. The sultaness, Valide, Ali Coumourgi, the Grand Seignior's favorite, the kislar aga, chief of the black eunuchs, and the aga of the janissaries were all for a war against the czar: the sultan was fixed in the same resolution; and the first order he gave the grand vizier was to go and attack the Muscovites with two hundred thousand men. Mehemet had never made a campaign; yet he was not an idiot, as the Swedes who were dissatisfied with his conduct affected to represent him. Upon receiving from the Grand Seignior a sabre, adorned with precious stones, he addressed him in the following terms: "Your highness knows that I was brought up to handle an axe

and cleave wood, not to wield a sword and command your armies. Nevertheless, I will endeavor to serve you to the best of my power; but should I fail of success, remember I have entreated you beforehand not to impute the blame to me." The sultan assured him he might depend upon his friendship and the vizier prepared to carry his orders into execution.

The first step of the Ottoman Porte was to imprison the Russian ambassador in the castle of the Seven Towers. It is the custom of the Turks to begin by arresting the ministers of those princes against whom they declare war. Strict observers of hospitality in everything else, in this they violate the most sacred law of nations. This injustice, however, they commit under the pretext of equity, believing themselves, or, at least, desirous of making others believe, that they never undertake any but just wars because they are consecrated by the approbation of their mufti. Upon this principle they take up arms, as they imagine, to chastise the violators of treaties; and think they have a right to punish the ambassadors of those kings with whom they are at enmity, as being accomplices in the treachery of their masters.

Add to this the ridiculous contempt they affect to entertain for Christian princes, and their ambassadors, the latter of whom they commonly consider in no other light than as the consuls of merchants.

The han of Crim Tartary, whom we call the kam, received orders to hold himself in readiness with forty thousand Tartars. This prince is sovereign

of Nagaï, Budziack, part of Circassia, and all Crim Tartary, a province anciently known by the name of Tauric Chersonese, into which the Greeks carried their arms and commerce, and founded powerful cities; and into which, in after times, the Genoese penetrated, when they were masters of the trade of Europe. In this country are to be seen the ruins of some Greek cities, and some monuments of the Genoese, which still subsist in the midst of desolation and barbarity.

The kam is called emperor by his own subjects; but with this grand title, he is nevertheless, the slave of the Porte. The Ottoman blood, from which the kams have sprung, and the right they pretend to have to the empire of the Turks, upon the failure of the Grand Seignior's race, render their family respectable, and their persons formidable even to the sultan himself. It is for this reason that the Grand Seignior dares not venture to destroy the race of the kams of Tartary; though indeed he seldom allows any of these princes to live to a great age. Their conduct is closely inspected by the neighboring pashas: their dominions are surrounded by janissaries; their inclinations thwarted by the grand viziers; and their designs always suspected. If the Tartars complain of the kam, the Porte deposes him under that pretext. If he is too popular, it is still a higher crime for which he suffers a more severe punishment. Thus almost all of them are driven from sovereign power into exile, and end their days at Rhodes, which is commonly their prison and their grave.

The Tartars, their subjects, are the most thiev-

ish people on earth, and, what is hardly to be credited, are, at the same time, the most hospitable. They will go fifty leagues from home to attack a caravan, or pillage a town; and yet when any stranger happens to travel through their country, he is not only received, lodged, and maintained everywhere, but through whatever places he passes, the inhabitants dispute with each other the honor of having him for their guest; and the master of the house, his wife, and daughters, are ambitious to serve him. This inviolable regard for hospitality they have derived from their ancestors, the Scythians; and they still preserve it, because the small number of strangers that travel among them, and the low price of all sorts of provisions, render the practice of such a virtue noways burdensome.

When the Tartars go to war, in conjunction with the Ottoman army, they are maintained by the Grand Seignior, but the booty they get is their only pay; and hence it is that they are better fitted for plundering than fighting.

The kam, won over to the King of Sweden's interest by presents and promises, at first obtained leave to make the general rendezvous of the troops at Bender, and even under the eye of Charles XII. in order the more effectually to convince that monarch, that the war was undertaken solely for his sake.

The new vizier, Baltagi Mehemet, who did not lie under the same circumstances, would not flatter a foreign prince so highly. He changed the order and Adrianople was the place fixed for the rendezvous of this great army. It is always in the vast and fer-

tile plains of Adrianople that the Turks assemble their armies when they are going to make war upon the Christians: there the troops that arrive from Asia and Africa repose and refresh themselves for a few weeks; but the grand vizier, in order to anticipate the preparations of the czar, allowed the army but three days' rest, and then marched to the Danube, from whence he advanced into Bessarabia.

The Turkish troops nowadays are not nearly so formidable as they were in ancient times, when they conquered so many kingdoms in Asia, Africa, and Europe—when, by their great strength of body, their valor, and numbers, they triumphed over enemies less robust and worse disciplined than themselves. Bŭt now that the Christians are more expert in the art of war, they seldom fail to beat the Turks in a pitched battle, and even with unequal numbers. If the Ottoman Empire has made some conquests in latter times, it has only been over the republic of Venice, esteemed more wise than warlike, defended by strangers, and little succored by the Christian princes who are perpetually at variance among themselves.

The janissaries and spahis always attack in a confused and disorderly manner: they are incapable of obeying the commands of their general, or of recovering their ranks. Their cavalry which, considering the goodness and fleetness of their horses, ought to be excellent, is unable to sustain the shock of the German cavalry. Their infantry cannot, even to this day, make use of fixed bayonets effectually. Add to this the fact that the

Turks have not had an able general since the time of Couprougli, who conquered the isle of Crete. In this instance a slave brought up in the indolence and silence of a seraglio, made a vizier through interest, and a general against his will, was leading a raw, undisciplined army against Russian troops hardened by twelve campaigns, and proud of having conquered the Swedes.

The czar, judging from appearances, was sure to vanquish Baltagi Mehemet; but was guilty of the same fault, regarding the Turks, which the King of Sweden had committed with reference to him: he despised his enemy too much. Upon the first news of the Turkish preparations, he left Moscow, and, having given orders for turning the siege of Riga into a blockade, assembled a body of eighty thousand men on the frontiers of Poland. With this army he took the road through Moldavia and Wallachia, formerly the country of the Daci, but now inhabited by Greek Christians, who are tributaries to the Grand Seignior.

Moldavia was, at that time, governed by Prince Cantemir, a Grecian by birth, and who united in his person the talents of the ancient Greeks, the knowledge of letters and of arms. He was supposed to have sprung from the famous Timur, known by the name of Tamerlane. This extraction appeared more honorable than a Greek origin and the reality of the descent is proved by the name of the conqueror. Timur, it is said, resembles Temir: the title of Can, which Timur possessed before he conquered Asia, is included in the word Cantemir: therefore Prince Cantemir is descended from

Tamerlane. Such are the foundations of most genealogies!

From whatever family Cantemir sprung, he owed all his fortune to the Ottoman Porte. Hardly had he received the investiture of his principality, when he betrayed his benefactor the Turkish emperor to the czar, from whom he expected greater advantages. He fondly imagined that the conqueror of Charles XII. would easily triumph over a vizier of so little reputation, who had never made a campaign, and who had chosen for his kiaia, or lieutenant, the superintendent of the customs in Turkey. He did not doubt but that his subjects would readily follow his standard, as the Greek patriarchs encouraged him in his revolt. The czar, therefore, having made a secret treaty with this prince, and received him into his army, advanced farther into the country; and in June, 1711, arrived on the northern banks of the river Hierase, now Pruth, near Jassy, the capital of Moldavia.

As soon as the grand vizier heard that Peter Alexiowitz was advancing on that side, he immediately decamped, and following the course of the Danube, resolved to cross the river on a bridge of boats, near a town called Saccia, at the same place where Darius formerly built the bridge that long went by his name. The Turkish army proceeded with so much expedition that it soon came in sight of the Muscovites, the river Pruth being between them.

The czar, sure of the Prince of Moldavia, never dreamed that the Moldavians would fail him. But it frequently happens that the interest of the prince

and that of the subjects are extremely different. The Moldavians liked the Turkish government, which is never fatal to any but the grandees, and affects a great lenity and mildness to its tributary states. They dreaded the Christians, and especially the Muscovites who had always treated them with inhumanity. They carried all their provisions to the Ottoman army.

Those who had engaged to furnish the Russians with provisions, carried out with the grand vizier that contract which they had made with the czar. The Wallachians, who border upon the Moldavians, discovered the same attachment to the Turks, so much had the remembrance of the Russian cruelty alienated all their affections.

The czar thus balked of his hopes, which perhaps he had too rashly entertained, saw his army on a sudden destitute of forage and provisions. The soldiers deserted in troops; and the army was soon reduced to less than thirty thousand men, ready to perish with hunger. The czar experienced the same misfortunes upon the banks of the Pruth, in having delivered himself up to Cantemir, that Charles XII. had done at Poltava, in relying upon Mazeppa. The Turks meanwhile passed the river, hemmed in the Russians, and formed an intrenched camp before them. It is somewhat surprising that the czar did not dispute the passage of the river, or, at least, repair this error by attacking the Turks immediately after the passage, instead of giving them time to destroy his army by hunger and fatigue. It would seem, indeed, that Peter did everything in this campaign to hasten his own

ruin. He found himself without provisions; the river Pruth behind him; a hundred and fifty thousand Turks before him; while forty thousand Tartars were continually harassing his army on the right and left. In this extremity, he made no scruple of acknowledging in public that he was at least reduced to as bad a condition as his brother Charles had been at Poltava.

Count Poniatowski, an indefatigable agent of the King of Sweden, was in the grand vizier's army, together with some Poles and Swedes, all of whom considered the ruin of the czar as inevitable.

As soon as Poniatowski saw that the armies must inevitably come to an engagement, he sent an express to the King of Sweden, who immediately set out from Bender, accompanied by forty officers, anticipating the mighty pleasure he should have in fighting the Emperor of Muscovy. After many losses, and several marches in which he suffered severely, the czar was driven back to the Pruth, without any other defence than a chevaux-de-frise, and a few wagons. A part of the janissaries and spahis attacked his army in this disadvantageous situation; but their attack was disorderly, and the Russians defended themselves with a firmness and resolution which nothing but despair and the presence of their prince could inspire.

The Turks were twice repulsed. Next day M. Poniatowski advised the grand vizier to starve the Russian army, which being in want of everything, would, together with its emperor, be obliged, in a day's time, to surrender at discretion.

The czar, since that time, has more than once

acknowledged that, in the whole course of his life, he never felt anything so exquisitely tormenting as the perturbation of mind in which he passed that night. He resolved in his thoughts all that he had been doing for so many years to promote the glory and happiness of his country. He reflected that so many grand undertakings, which had always been interrupted by wars, were now, perhaps, going to perish with him, before they were fully accomplished. And he plainly perceived, that he must either be destroyed by famine, or attack about a hundred and eighty thousand men with feeble and dispirited troops, diminished one-half in their number, the cavalry almost entirely dismounted, and the infantry exhausted with hunger and fatigue.

He sent for General Czermetoff in the evening, and, without the least hesitation, or even so much as asking any one's advice, ordered him to have everything in readiness next morning for attacking the Turks with fixed bayonets.

He likewise gave express orders that all the baggage should be burnt, and that no officer should keep above one wagon so that, in case of a defeat, the enemy might not obtain the booty they expected.

Having settled with the general everything relating to the battle, he retired to his tent, oppressed with grief, and racked with convulsions, a disease which often attacked him, and always recurred with redoubled violence when he was under any perturbation of mind. He gave peremptory orders that no one should presume, under any pretext whatsoever, to enter his tent in the night; not choosing

to receive any remonstrances against a resolution which, however desperate, was absolutely necessary, and still less that anyone should be a witness of the melancholy condition in which he was.

Meanwhile the greatest part of the baggage was burnt, according to his orders. All the army followed the example, though with much reluctance; and several buried their most valuable effects in the earth. The general officers were already giving orders for the march, and endeavoring to inspire the army with that courage which they did not possess. The soldiers, exhausted with hunger and fatigue, advanced without spirit and without hope. The women, with whom the army was but too much crowded, set up the most lamentable shrieks and cries, which contributed still more to enervate the men; and next morning every one expected death or slavery, as the only alternative. This picture is by no means exaggerated: it agrees exactly with the accounts that were given by some officers who served in the army.

There was, at that time, in the Russian camp, a woman as extraordinary, perhaps, as the czar himself. As yet she was known only by the name of Catherine. Her mother was a poor countrywoman, called Erb-Magden, of the village of Ringen in Esthonia, a province where the people held by villenage, and which was then subject to the Swedes. She never knew her father but was baptized by the name of Martha. The vicar of the parish, out of pure charity, brought her up to the age of fourteen; after which she went to service at

Marienburg, and hired herself to a Lutheran minister of that country, called Glück.

In 1702, being then eighteen years of age, she married a Swedish dragoon. The day immediately succeeding her marriage, a party of the Swedish troops having been defeated by the Muscovites, the dragoon, who was in the action, disappeared, and was never heard of more; but whether or not he was taken prisoner, his wife could never learn, nor indeed from that time could she ever procure the least intelligence about him.

A few days after, being made a prisoner herself by General Baur, she entered into his service, and afterwards into that of Marshal Czermetoff, by whom she was given to Menzikoff, a man who experienced the greatest vicissitudes of fortune, having, from a pastry-cook's boy, been raised to the rank of a general and a prince, and at last stripped of everything and banished into Siberia where he ended his days in misery and despair.

The first time the emperor saw her was one evening as he was at supper with Prince Menzikoff, and he instantly fell in love with her. He married her privately in 1707: not seduced into this step by the artifices of the woman, but because he found her possessed of a strength and firmness of mind capable of seconding his schemes, and even of continuing them after his death. He had long before divorced his first wife Ottokesa, the daughter of a boyard, who was accused of opposing the alterations which he was introducing into his dominions. This crime, in the eyes of the czar, was the most heinous of all others. He would have no-

body in his family whose thoughts did not exactly correspond with his. The czar imagined he could discern in Catherine the qualities of a sovereign, though she had none of the virtues of her sex. For her sake he disdained and broke through the prejudices that would have fettered a man of ordinary capacity. He caused her to be crowned empress. The same talents which made her the wife of Peter Alexiowitz, procured her the empire after the death of her husband; and Europe has beheld with surprise a woman who could neither read* nor write, compensating the want of education, and the weakness of her sex, by her invincible courage and resolution, and filling with glory the throne of a legislator.

When she married the czar, she renounced the Lutheran religion, in which she had been born, and embraced that of Muscovy. She was rebaptized, according to the rules of the Russian church, and instead of Martha, she took the name of Catherine, by which she was ever after known. This woman, being at the camp at Pruth, held a council with the general officers and the vice-chancellor, Schaffirof, while the czar was in his tent.

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* The Sieur de la Motraye pretends that she had a good education, and could both read and write with great facility. The contrary of this, however, is known to all the world. The peasants of Livonia are never allowed to learn either to read or write, owing to an ancient privilege which is termed the benefit of clergy, formerly established among the barbarians who were converted to Christianity, and still subsisting in this country. The memoirs from which we have extracted this anecdote, further add, that the Princess Elizabeth, afterwards empress, always signed for her mother, from the time she could write.

The result of their deliberations was that they must necessarily sue to the Turks for a peace, and endeavor to persuade the czar to agree to such a measure. The vice-chancellor wrote a letter to the grand vizier in his master's name. This letter the czarina carried to the emperor's tent, notwithstanding his prohibition; and having with tears and entreaties prevailed upon him to sign it, she forthwith collected all her jewels, money, and most valuable effects, together with what money she could borrow from the general officers, and having by these means made up a considerable present, she sent it, with the czar's letter, to Osman Aga, lieutenant of the grand vizier. Baltagi Mehemet replied with the lofty air of a vizier and a conqueror, "Let the czar send me his prime minister, and I shall then consider what is to be done." The vice-chancellor, Schaffirof, immediately repaired to the Turkish camp, with some presents which he publicly offered to the grand vizier, sufficient to show him that they stood in need of his clemency, but too inconsiderable to corrupt his integrity.

The vizier at first demanded that the czar, with his whole army, should surrender at discretion. The vice-chancellor replied that his master was going to attack him in a quarter of an hour, and that the Russians would perish to a man rather than submit to such dishonorable conditions. Schaffirof's application was strongly seconded by the remonstrances of Osman.

Baltagi Mehemet was no warrior: he saw that the janissaries had been repulsed the day before; so that Osman easily prevailed upon him not to risk

such certain advantages upon the fate of a battle. He accordingly granted a suspension of arms for six hours, in which time the terms of the treaty might be fully settled.

During the parley, there happened a trifling incident, which shows plainly that the Turks often keep their word with a more scrupulous exactness than we imagine. Two Italian gentlemen, relations of M. Brillo, lieutenant-colonel of a regiment of grenadiers in the czar's service, having gone to some distance in quest of forage, were taken prisoners by some Tartars who brought them to the camp and offered to sell them to an officer of the janissaries. The Turk enraged at their presumption, in having thus violated the truce, arrested the Tartars, and carried them himself before the grand vizier, together with the two prisoners.

The vizier sent back the two gentlemen to the czar's camp, and ordered the Tartars, who had been chiefly concerned in carrying them off, to be beheaded.

Meanwhile the Kam of Tartary opposed the conclusion of the treaty, which would deprive him of all hopes of plunder; and Poniatowski seconded the kam with the strongest arguments. But Osman carried his point against the importunity of the Tartar, and the insinuations of Poniatowski.

The vizier thought that by concluding an advantageous peace he should sufficiently consult the honor and interest of his master. He insisted that the Russians should restore Azov, burn the galleys which lay in that harbor, demolish the important citadels built upon the Palus Mæotis, and deliver

all the cannon and ammunition of these fortresses into the hands of the Grand Seignior; that the czar should withdraw his troops from Poland, give no further disturbance to the few Cossacks that were under the protection of the Poles, nor to those who were subject to the Turks; and that for the future he should pay the Tartars an annual subsidy of forty thousand sequins; an odious tribute long since imposed, but from which the czar had delivered his country.

At last the treaty was going to be signed, without so much as making mention of the King of Sweden. All that Poniatowski could obtain of the vizier was to insert an article, by which the czar bound himself not to incommode the king in his return. And what is very remarkable, it was stipulated in this article, that the czar and Charles should make peace if they thought proper, and could agree upon the terms.

On these conditions the czar was permitted to retire with his army, cannon, artillery, colors, and baggage. The Turks supplied him with provisions, and he had plenty of everything in his camp two hours after the signing of the treaty, which was begun, concluded, and signed the 21st of July, 1711.

Just as the czar, now extricated from this terrible dilemma, was marching off with drums beating and colors flying, the King of Sweden arrived impatient for the fight, and happy in the thoughts of having his enemy in his power. He had ridden post above fifty leagues from Bender to Jassy. He arrived the very moment that the Russians were beginning to retire in peace but he could not pene-

trate the Turkish camp, without passing the Pruth by a bridge, three leagues distant. Charles XII. who never did anything like other men, swam across the river, at the hazard of being drowned, and traversed the Russian camp at the risk of being taken. At length he reached the Turkish army, and alighted at the tent of Poniatowski, who informed me of all these particulars, both by letter and by word of mouth. The count came to him with a sorrowful countenance, and told him that he had lost an opportunity which perhaps he would never be able to recover.

The king, inflamed with resentment, went straightway to the tent of the grand visier, and with a stern air, reproached him with the treaty he had made. "I have a right," says the grand vizier, with calm aspect, "to make either peace or war." "But," adds the king, "have you not the whole Russian army in your power?" "Our law commands us," replies the vizier, with great gravity, "to grant peace to our enemies, when they implore our mercy." "And does it command you," resumes the king in a passion, "to make a bad treaty, when you may impose what laws you please? Had you not a fair opportunity, if you would have embraced it, of leading the czar a prisoner to Constantinople?"

The Turk, driven to this extremity, replied very coldly: "And who would have governed his empire in his absence? It is not proper that all kings should leave their dominions." Charles made no other answer than by a smile of indignation. He then threw himself down upon a sofa, and eyeing

the vizier with an air of contempt and resentment, stretched out his leg, and entangling his spur in the Turk's robe purposely tore it: after which he rose, remounted his horse, and with a sorrowful heart returned to Bender. Poniatowski continued some time longer with the grand vizier, to try if he could not prevail upon him by more gentle means to extort greater concessions from the czar; but the hour of prayer having come, the Turk, without answering a single word, went to wash and attend divine service.

CHAPTER VI.

Intrigues at the Porte. The Kam of Tartary and the Pasha of Bender endeavor to force Charles to depart. He defends himself with forty domestics against the whole army. He is taken, and treated as a prisoner.

THE FORTUNE of the King of Sweden, now so different from what it had formerly been, harassed him even in the most trifling circumstances. On his return, he found his little camp at Bender, and all his apartment overflowed by the waters of the Dneister. He retired to the distance of a few miles, near the village of Varnitza; and, as if he had had a secret foreboding of what was to befall him, he there built a large house of stone, capable, on occasion, of sustaining an assault for a few hours. He even furnished it in a magnificent manner, contrary to his usual custom, in order the more effectually to command the respect of the Turks.

He likewise built two other houses, one for his chancery, and the other for his favorite Grothusen, who kept a table at the king's expense. While Charles was thus employed in building near Bender, as if he had intended always to remain in Turkey, Baltagi Mehemet, dreading more than ever the intrigues and complaints of this prince at the Porte, had sent the resident of the Emperor of Germany to Vienna to demand a free passage for the King of Sweden through the hereditary dominions of the

house of Austria. The envoy, in the space of three weeks, brought back a promise from the imperial regency, importing that they would pay Charles XII. all due honors, and conduct him safely into Pomerania.

Application was made to the regency of Vienna, because Charles, the Emperor of Germany who had succeeded Joseph, was then in Spain disputing the crown of that kingdom with Philip V. While the German envoy was executing this commission at Vienna, the grand vizier sent three pashas to acquaint the King of Sweden, that he must quit the Turkish dominions.

The king, being previously apprised of the orders with which they were charged, caused intimation to be given them, that if they presumed to make him any proposals contrary to his honor, or to the respect that was due to his character, he would forthwith have them all strung up on a gallows. The Pasha of Thessalonica, who delivered the message, disguised the harshness of the commission, under the most respectful terms. Charles put an end to the audience, without deigning to give them an answer. His chancellor, Mullern, who staid with the three pashas, briefly explained to them his master's refusal, which indeed they had sufficiently understood by his profound silence.

The grand vizier was not to be diverted from his purpose; he ordered Pasha Ismael, the new Serasquier of Bender, to threaten the king with the sultan's indignation, if he did not immediately come to a resolution. This serasquier was a man of a mild temper and engaging address which had

gained him the good will of Charles, and the friendship of all the Swedes. The king entered into a conference with him; but it was only to tell him that he would not depart till Achmet had granted him two favors; the punishment of his grand vizier, and a hundred thousand men to conduct him back to Poland.

Baltagi Mehemet was sensible that Charles remained in Turkey only to ruin him. He therefore took care to place guards on all the roads from Bender to Constantinople, to intercept the king's letters. He did more; he retrenched his "Thaïm," that is to say, the provision which the Porte allows those princes to whom she grants an asylum. That of the King of Sweden was immense, consisting of five hundred crowns a day in money, and a profusion of everything necessary to maintain a court in splendor and affluence.

As soon as the king was informed that the vizier had presumed to retrench his allowance, he turned to the steward of his household and said, "Hitherto you have only had two tables, I command you to have four for the future."

The officers of Charles XII. had been used to find nothing impossible which their master ordered; at present, however, they had neither money nor provisions. They were forced to borrow at twenty, thirty, and forty per cent. of the officers, domestics, and janissaries who were growing rich by the king's profusion. M. Fabricius, the envoy of Holstein, Jeffreys, the English minister, and their secretaries and friends, gave all that they had. The king, with his usual stateliness, and without any concern about

the morrow, lived on these presents, which could not have sufficed him long. It was necessary to elude the vigilance of the guards, and to send privately to Constantinople to borrow money of the European merchants. But everybody refused to lend a king who seemed to have put himself out of a condition of ever being able to repay them. One English merchant alone, called Cook, ventured to lend him about forty thousand crowns, content to lose that sum if the King of Sweden should happen to die. This money was brought to the king's little camp, just as they began to be in want of everything, and even to give over all hopes of any further relief.

During this interval, M. Poniatowski wrote, even from the camp of the grand vizier, an account of the campaign at Pruth, in which he accused Baltagi Mehemet of perfidy and cowardice. An old janissary, provoked at the vizier's weakness, and gained moreover by Poniatowski's liberality, undertook the delivery of the letter; and having obtained leave, presented it with his own hand to the sultan.

A few days after, Poniatowski left the camp, and repaired to the Porte to form cabals, as usual, against the grand vizier.

Everything favored his project. The czar, being now at liberty, was in no haste to perform his engagements. The keys of Azov were not yet come: the grand vizier was answerable for them, and justly dreading the indignation of his master, durst not venture to appear in his presence.

At that time the seraglio was filled more than ever with intrigues and factions. These cabals,

which prevail in all courts, and which in ours commonly end in the dismissal, or, at most, in the banishment of the minister, never fail at Constantinople to occasion the loss of more than one head. The present plot proved fatal to the old vizier Chourlouli, and to Osman, the lieutenant of Baltagi Mehemet, who had been the principal author of the peace of Pruth, and had afterwards obtained a considerable post at the Porte. Among Osman's treasures were found the Czarina's ring and twenty thousand pieces of gold of Saxon and Russian coin; a plain proof that money alone had extricated the czar from his dangerous situation, and ruined the fortunes of Charles. The vizier, Baltagi Mehemet, was banished to the isle of Lemnos, where he died three years after. The sultan did not seize his effects, either at his banishment or his death. He was far from being rich; and his poverty was a sufficient vindication of his character.

This grand vizier was succeeded by Jussuf, or Joseph, whose fortune was as singular as that of his predecessors. Born on the frontiers of Muscovy, and taken prisoner at six years of age, with his family, he had been sold to a janissary. He was long a servant in the seraglio, and at last became the second person in the empire where he had been a slave; but he was only the shadow of a minister. The young selictar, Ali Coumourgi, raised him to that slippery post in hopes of one day filling it himself; and Jussuf, his creature, had nothing to do but to set the seals of the empire to whatever the favorite desired. From the very beginning of this vizier's ministry, the politics of the Ottoman court

seemed to undergo a total alteration. The czar's plenipotentiaries, who resided at Constantinople, either as ministers or hostages, were treated with greater civility than ever. The grand vizier confirmed with them the peace of Pruth: but what mortified the King of Sweden more than all the rest was, to hear that the secret alliance made with the czar at Constantinople, was brought about by the mediation of the English and Dutch ambassadors.

Constantinople, from the time of Charles's retreat to Bender, had become what Rome had often been, the centre of the negotiations of Christendom. Count Desaleurs, the French ambassador at the Porte, supported the interests of Charles and Stanislaus: the Emperor of Germany's minister opposed them; and the factions of Sweden and Muscovy clashed, as those of France and Spain have long done at the court of Rome.

England and Holland seemed to be neutral, but were not so in reality. The new trade which the czar had opened at St. Petersburg attracted the attention of these two commercial nations.

The English and the Dutch will always side with that prince who favors their trade the most: there were many advantages to be derived from a connection with the czar; and therefore it is no wonder that the ministers of England and Holland should serve him privately at the Porte. One of the conditions of this new alliance was that Charles should be immediately obliged to quit the Turkish dominions, whether it was that the czar hoped to seize him on the road, or that he thought him less

formidable in his own kingdom than in Turkey where he was always on the point of arming the Ottoman troops against the Russian Empire.

Charles was perpetually soliciting the Porte to send him back through Poland with a numerous army. The divan was resolved to send him back with a simple guard of seven or eight thousand men, not as a king whom they meant to assist, but as a guest of whom they wanted to get rid. For this purpose the sultan Achmet, wrote him the following letter:

"Most powerful among the kings that adore Jesus, redresser of wrongs and injuries in the ports and republics of the South and North, shining in majesty, lover of honor and glory, and of our sublime Porte, Charles, King of Sweden, whose enterprises may God crown with success.

"As soon as the most illustrious Achmet, formerly Chiaoux Pachi, shall have the honor to deliver you this letter, adorned with our imperial seal, be persuaded and convinced of the truth of our intentions therein contained, viz., that though we had proposed once more to march our ever victorious army against the czar; yet that prince, in order to avoid the just resentment which we had conceived at his delaying to execute the treaty concluded on the banks of the Pruth, and afterwards renewed at our sublime Porte, having surrendered into our hands the castle and city of Azov, and endeavored by the mediation of the English and Dutch ambassadors, our ancient allies, to cultivate a lasting peace with us, we have granted his request, and delivered to his plenipotentiaries, who remain with us as hostages, our imperial ratification, after having received his from their hands.

"We have given to the most honorable and

valiant Delvet Gherai, Kam of Budziack, Crim Tartary, Nagay, and Circassia, and to our most sage counsellor and noble Serasquier of Bender, Ismael, (whose magnificence and wisdom may God preserve and increase) our inviolable and salutary orders for your return through Poland, according to your first intention, which has again been represented to us in your name. You must, therefore, prepare to set out next winter under the protection of providence, and with an honorable guard, in order to return to your own territories, taking care to pass through those of Poland in a friendly manner.

"Whatever is necessary for your journey shall be furnished you by my sublime Porte as well in money as in men, horses, and wagons. Above all things, we advise and exhort you to give the most distinct and express orders to all the Swedes, and other persons in your retinue, to commit no outrage, nor to be guilty of any action that may tend either directly or indirectly to break this peace and alliance.

"By these means you will preserve our good-will, of which we shall endeavor to give you as great and as frequent proofs as we shall have opportunities. The troops designed to attend you shall receive orders agreeable to our imperial intentions.

"Given at our sublime Porte of Constantinople, the fourteenth of the moon Rebyul Eurech, 1214 (which answers to the nineteenth of April, 1712)."

This letter did not deprive the King of Sweden of all hopes. He wrote to the sultan, that he should ever retain a grateful remembrance of the favors his highness had bestowed upon him; but that he believed the sultan was too just to send him back with the simple guard of a flying camp,

into a country that still swarmed with the czar's troops. And indeed the Emperor of Russia, notwithstanding the first article of the treaty of Pruth, by which he was obliged to withdraw all his troops from Poland, had sent fresh ones into that kingdom; and it is somewhat surprising that the Grand Seignior should be ignorant of this particular.

The bad policy of the Porte, in being so much guided by the motives of vanity as to allow Christian princes to have ambassadors at Constantinople, without ever sending a single agent to any Christian court, gives the latter an opportunity of discovering, and sometimes of directing the most secret resolutions of the sultan, and keeps the divan in profound ignorance of what passes in the Christian world.

The sultan, shut up in his seraglio among his women and eunuchs, can only see with the eyes of his grand vizier. That minister, as inaccessible as his master, his time wholly engrossed with the intrigues of his seraglio, and having no foreign correspondence, is commonly deceived himself, or else deceives the sultan, who deposes or causes him to be strangled for the first offence, in order to choose another minister as ignorant or as perfidious, who behaves like his predecessors, and soon shares the same fate.

So great, for the most part, is the inactivity and supine negligence of this court, that were the Christian princes to combine against it, their fleets might be at the Dardanelles, and their land forces at the gates of Adrianople, before the Turks would think of taking any measures for their defence; but their

jarring interests which must ever divide the Christian world, will preserve the Turks from a fate to which they seem at present exposed, by their want of policy, and by their ignorance of the art of war, both by sea and land.

So little was Achmet acquainted with what passed in Poland, that he sent an aga to inquire whether, in reality, the czar's troops were still in that country. The aga was accompanied by two secretaries of the King of Sweden, who understood the Turkish language and were to serve as evidences against him, in case he should give in a false report.

The aga saw the Russian forces with his own eyes, and informed the sultan of every particular. Achmet, fired with indignation, was going to strangle the grand vizier; but the favorite, who protected him, and who thought he should have further occasion for him, obtained his pardon, and supported him some time longer in the ministry.

The cause of the Russians was openly espoused by the vizier, and secretly favored by Ali Coumourgi who had changed sides. But the sultan was so provoked, the infraction of the treaty was so manifest, and the janissaries who often make the ministers, the favorites, and even the sultans tremble, called out for war with so much importunity, that no one in the seraglio durst offer a more moderate proposal.

The Grand Seignior immediately committed to the Seven Towers the Russian ambassadors who were already as much accustomed to go to prison as to an audience. War was declared afresh against

the czar, the horses' tails were displayed, and orders were given to all the pashas to assemble an army of two hundred thousand men. The sultan himself quitted Constantinople, and fixed his court at Adrianople, that he might be so much nearer to the seat of the war.

Meanwhile a solemn embassy, sent to the Grand Seignior by Augustus and the republic of Poland, was upon the road to Adrianople. The palatine of Massovia was at the head of this embassy with a retinue of above three hundred persons.

All the members of the embassy were seized and imprisoned in one of the suburbs of the city. Never was the King of Sweden's party more highly flattered than on this occasion; and yet these great preparations were rendered abortive, and all their hopes were again disappointed.

If we may believe a public minister, a man of sagacity and penetration, who then resided at Constantinople, young Coumourgi had already formed other designs than that of disputing a desert country with the czar, by a war, the event of which must have been so uncertain. He had resolved to strip the Venetians of Peloponnesus, now called the Morea, and to make himself master of Hungary.

These grand projects he proposed to carry into execution as soon as he should have attained the post of prime vizier, from which he was still excluded on account of his youth. In this view it was more to his advantage to be the ally than the enemy of the czar. It was neither his interest nor his inclination to keep the King of Sweden any longer; and much less to arm the Turkish Empire

in his favor. He not only resolved to dismiss that prince, but he openly declared that, for the future, no Christian minister should be allowed to reside at Constantinople; that all the common ambassadors were, at best, but honorable spies, who corrupted or betrayed the viziers, and had too long influenced the intrigues of the seraglio; and that the Franks settled at Pera and in the seaports of the Levant, were merchants who needed a consul only, and not an ambassador. The grand vizier, who owed his post and even his life to the favorite, and who besides stood greatly in awe of him, complied with his intentions with so much the more alacrity, as he had sold himself to the Russians, and hoped by this means to be revenged on the King of Sweden, who had endeavored to ruin him. The mufti, a creature of Ali Coumourgi, was likewise an absolute slave to his will. He had been a keen advocate for a war with Russia when the favorite was of that opinion; but the moment Coumourgi changed his mind, he pronounced it to be unjust. Thus the army was hardly assembled when they began to listen to proposals of peace. The vice-chancellor, Shaffirof, and young Czeremetoff, the czar's hostages and plenipotentiaries at the Porte, promised, after several negotiations, that their master should withdraw his troops from Poland. The grand vizier who well knew that the czar would never execute this treaty made no scruple to sign it; and the sultan, satisfied with having though only in appearance imposed laws upon the Russians, continued still at Adrianople. Thus, in less than six

months, peace was ratified with the czar, war declared, and peace renewed again.

The chief article of all these treaties was to oblige the King of Sweden to depart. The sultan was unwilling to endanger his own honor and that of the Ottoman Empire, by exposing the king to the risk of being taken by his enemies on the road. It was stipulated that he should depart; but only on condition that the ambassadors of Poland and Muscovy should be responsible for the safety of his person. Accordingly these ambassadors swore, in the name of their masters, that neither the czar nor the King of Poland should molest him in his journey; and Charles was to engage, on his side, that he would not attempt to excite any commotions in Poland. The divan having thus settled the fate of Charles, Ismael, Serasquier of Bender, repaired to Varnitza where the king was encamped and acquainted him with the resolutions of the Porte, insinuating to him with great politeness that there was no time for any longer delay, but that he must necessarily depart.

Charles made no other answer than this: that the Grand Seignior had promised him an army, and not a guard; and that kings ought to keep their word.

Meanwhile General Flemming, the minister and favorite of Augustus, maintained a secret correspondence with the Kam of Tartary and the Serasquier of Bender. La Mare, a French gentleman, a colonel in the service of Saxony, had made several journeys from Bender to Dresden; and all these journeys were strongly suspected.

At this very time, the King of Sweden caused a courier, whom Flemming had sent to the Tartarian prince, to be arrested on the frontiers of Wallachia. The letters were brought to him, and deciphered, and from them it clearly appeared that a correspondence was carried on between the Tartars and the court at Dresden; but the letters were conceived in such ambiguous and general terms, that it was difficult to discover whether the intention of Augustus was only to detach the Turks from the interest of Sweden, or if he meant that the kam should deliver Charles to the Saxons as he conducted him back to Poland.

We can hardly imagine that a prince so generous as Augustus would, by seizing the person of the King of Sweden, endanger the lives of his ambassadors, and of three hundred Polish gentlemen who were detained at Adrianople as pledges for Charles's safety.

But it is well known, on the other hand, that Flemming, the minister of Augustus, who had an absolute power over his master, was a man devoid of every principle of virtue or honor. The injuries which the elector had received from the King of Sweden might seem to excuse any kind of revenge; and it might be thought that, if the court of Dresden could buy Charles from the Kam of Tartary, they would find it no difficult matter to purchase the liberty of the Polish hostages at the Ottoman Porte.

These reasons were carefully canvassed by the king, Mullern his privy chancellor, and Grothusen his favorite. They read the letters again and again;

and their unhappy condition making them more suspicious, they resolved to believe the worst.

A few days after the king was confirmed in his suspicions by the sudden departure of Count Sapieha who had taken refuge with him and now left him abruptly in order to go to Poland to throw himself into the arms of Augustus. Upon any other occasion he would have considered Sapieha only as a malcontent, but in his present delicate situation he at once concluded him to be a traitor. The repeated importunities with which he was pressed to depart converted his suspicions into certainty. The inflexible obstinacy of his temper cooperating with these circumstances, confirmed him in the opinion that they intended to betray him and deliver him up to his enemies, though this plot had never been fully proved.

Perhaps he was mistaken in supposing that Augustus had made a bargain with the Tartars for his person, but he was much more deceived in relying on the assistance of the Ottoman court. Be that as it may, he resolved to gain time.

He told the Pasha of Bender that he could not depart till he had received money to discharge his debts; for though his Thaim had for a long time been duly paid, his unbounded liberality had always obliged him to borrow. The pasha asked him how much he wanted. The king replied, at a venture, a thousand purses, amounting to fifteen hundred thousand livres, full weight. The pasha acquainted the Porte with his request. The sultan, instead of a thousand purses which Charles had required,

granted him twelve hundred, and wrote the pasha the following letter:

The Grand Seignior's Letter to the Pasha of Bender.

"The design of this imperial letter is to acquaint you that, upon your representation and request, and upon that of the most noble Delvet Gherai Kam, to our sublime Porte, our imperial munificence has granted a thousand purses to the King of Sweden, which shall be sent to Bender under the care and conduct of the most illustrious Pasha Mehemet, formerly Chiaoux Pachi, to remain in your custody till the departure of the King of Sweden whose steps may God direct, and then to be given him together with two hundred purses more, as an overplus of our imperial liberality, above what he demands.

"With regard to the route of Poland, which he is resolved to take, you and the kam who are to attend him, shall be careful to pursue such wise and prudent measures as may, during the whole journey, prevent the troops under your command as well as those of the King of Sweden from committing any outrage, or being guilty of any action that may be deemed a violation of the peace which still subsists between our sublime Porte and the kingdom and republic of Poland; so that the king may pass in a friendly manner under our protection.

"By doing this (which you must expressly require him to do) he will receive from the Poles all the honor and respect that is due to his majesty; as we have been assured by the ambassadors of Augustus and the republic who, on this condition, have even offered themselves together with several others of the Polish nobility, if required, as hostages for the security of his passage.

"When the time which you and the most noble

Delvet Gherai shall fix for the march, has come, you shall put yourself at the head of your brave soldiers, among whom shall be the Tartars headed by the kam, and you shall conduct the King of Sweden and his men.

"And may it please the only God, the Almighty, to direct your steps and theirs. The Pasha of Aulos shall continue at Bender with a regiment of spahis and another of janissaries, to defend it in your absence. And in following our imperial orders and intentions, in all these points and articles, you will deserve the continuance of our imperial favor, as well as the praise and recompense due to all those who observe them.

> "Done at our imperial residence of Constantinople, the 2d of the moon Cheval, 1214 of the Hegira."

While they were waiting for this answer from the Grand Seignior, Charles wrote to the Porte, complaining of the treachery of which he suspected the Kam of Tartary to be guilty; but all the passages were well guarded and besides, the minister was against him, so that his letters never reached the sultan. Nay, the vizier would not allow M. Desaleurs to come to Adrianople where the Porte then was, lest that minister who was an agent of the King of Sweden, should endeavor to disconcert the plan he had formed for obliging him to depart.

Charles, enraged to see himself thus hunted, as it were, from the Grand Seignior's dominions, resolved not to quit them at all.

He might have desired to return through Germany, or to take shipping on the Black Sea, in order to sail to Marseilles by the Mediterranean, but

he rather chose to ask nothing, and to wait the event.

When the twelve hundred purses had arrived, his treasurer Grothusen who, during his long abode in Turkey, had learned the language of the country, went to wait upon the pasha without an interpreter, hoping to draw the money from him and afterwards to form some new intrigue at the Porte, foolishly supposing, as he always did, that the Swedish party would at last be able to arm the Ottoman Empire against the czar.

Grothusen told the pasha that the king could not get ready his equipages without money: "But," said the pasha, "we shall defray all the expenses of your departure; your master shall be at no charge while he continues under my protection."

Grothusen replied, that the difference between the equipages of the Turks and those of the Franks was so great, that they were obliged to apply to the Swedish and Polish artificers at Varnitza.

He assured him that his master was willing to depart and that this money would facilitate and hasten his departure. The too credulous pasha gave the twelve hundred purses and a few days after came to the king, and, in a most respectful manner, begged to receive his orders for his departure.

He was extremely surprised when the king told him he was not yet ready to go and that he wanted a thousand purses more. The pasha, confounded at this answer, stood speechless for a moment; then retiring to a window, he was observed to shed some tears. At last, addressing himself to the king; "I shall lose my head," says he, "for having obliged

your majesty: I have given you the twelve hundred purses against the express orders of my sovereign." So saying, he took his leave with a dejected countenance.

The king stopped him, and said that he would make an excuse for him to the sultan. "Ah!" replied the Turk, as he was going away, "my master can punish faults, but cannot excuse them."

Pasha Ismael carried this piece of news to the kam who having received the same orders as the pasha, not to suffer the twelve hundred purses to be given to the king before his departure, and having consented to the delivery of the money, was as apprehensive as the pasha, of the Grand Seignior's indignation. They both wrote to the Porte in their own vindication, protesting they did not give the twelve hundred purses but upon a solemn promise from the king's minister that he would depart without delay, and beseeching his highness not to impute the king's refusal to their disobedience.

Charles, still persisting in the belief that the kam and pasha intended to deliver him up to his enemies, ordered M. Funk, who was then his envoy at the Ottoman court, to lay his complaints against them before the sultan and to ask a thousand purses more. His great generosity and the little account he made of money, hindered him from perceiving the meanness of this proposal. He did it with a view to be refused, and in order to find a fresh pretext for delaying his departure. But a man must be reduced to strange extremities, to stand in need of such artifices. Savari, his interpreter, an artful and enterprising man, carried the letter to Adrian-

ople, in spite of all the care which the grand vizier had taken to guard the passes.

Funk was obliged to present this dangerous request. All the answer he received was to be thrown into prison. The sultan, in a passion, convoked an extraordinary divan and, what very seldom happens, spoke himself on the occasion. His speech, according to the translation which was then made of it, was conceived in the following terms:

"I have hardly known the King of Sweden except by his defeat at Poltava and by the application he made to me to grant him an asylum in my dominions. I have not, I believe, any need of him, nor any reason either to love or fear him. Nevertheless, without consulting any other motives than the hospitality of a Mussulman and my own generosity which sheds the dew of its favors upon the great as well as the small, upon strangers as well as my own subjects, I have received and assisted him, his ministers, officers, and soldiers, and, for the space of three years and a half, have continued to load him with presents.

"I have granted him a considerable guard to conduct him back to his own kingdom. He asked a thousand purses to defray some expenses, though I pay them all. Instead of a thousand, I granted him twelve hundred. After having gotten these out of the hands of the Serasquier of Bender, he asks a thousand purses more, and refuses to depart under pretence that the guard is too small, whereas, in fact, it is but too large to pass through the country of a friend.

"I ask you then whether it be a violation of the

laws of hospitality to send back this prince, and whether foreign powers ought to accuse me of cruelty and injustice in case I should be obliged to compel him to depart." All the members of the divan answered that such a conduct would be consistent with the strictest rules of justice.

The mufti declared that Mussulmans were not bound to show any hospitality to infidels, and much less to the ungrateful; and he gave his fetfa, a kind of mandate which commonly accompanies the important orders of the Grand Seignior. These fetfas are revered as oracles, though the persons by whom they are given are as much slaves to the sultan as any others.

The order and the fetfa were carried to Bender by the bouyouk Imraour, grand-master of the horse, and a Chiaoux pasha, first usher. The Pasha of Bender received the order at the lodgings of the Kam of Tartary from whence he immediately repaired to Varnitza, to ask the king whether he would depart in a friendly manner, or lay him under the necessity of executing the sultan's orders.

Charles XII. being thus menaced, could not restrain his passion. "Obey your master, if you dare," says he to the pasha, "and leave my presence immediately." The pasha, fired with indignation, returned at full gallop, contrary to the common custom of the Turks; and meeting Fabricius by the way, he called out to him, without halting: "The king will not listen to reason; you will see strange things presently." The same day he discontinued the supply of the king's provisions and removed the guard of janissaries. He caused intimation to

be made to the Poles and Cossacks at Varnitza, that, if they had a mind to have any provisions, they must quit the King of Sweden's camp, repair to Bender, and put themselves under the protection of the Porte. These orders were readily obeyed by all, and the king was left without any other attendants than the officers of his household, and three hundred Swedish soldiers, to make head against twenty thousand Tartars, and six thousand Turks.

There were now no provisions in the camp either for man or horse. The king ordered twenty of the fine Arabian horses which had been sent him by the Grand Seignior, to be shot without the camp, adding: "I will have none of their provisions nor their horses." This was an excellent feast to the Tartars who, as all the world knows, think horse-flesh delicious fare. Meanwhile the Turks and Tartars invested the king's little camp on all sides.

Charles, without the least discomposure, ordered his three hundred Swedes to raise regular intrenchments, in which work he himself assisted; as did likewise his chancellor, his treasurer, his secretaries, his valets de chambre, and all his domestics. Some barricaded the windows, and others fastened beams behind the doors, in the form of buttresses.

After the house was sufficiently barricaded, and the king had ridden round his pretended fortifications, he sat down to chess with his favorite Grothusen, with as much tranquillity as if everything had been perfectly safe and secure. Happily M. Fabricius, the envoy of Holstein, did not lodge at Varnitza, but at a small village between Varnitza

and Bender, where M. Jeffreys, the English envoy to the King of Sweden, likewise resided. These two ministers, seeing the storm ready to burst, undertook the office of mediators between the king and the Turks. The kam, and especially the Pasha of Bender, who had no inclination to offer any violence to the Swedish monarch, received the offers of these two ministers with great satisfaction. They had two conferences at Bender, in which the usher of the seraglio, and the grand master of the horse, who had brought the sultan's order, and the mufti's fetfa assisted.

M. Fabricius* declared to them that his Swedish majesty had good reason to believe that they designed to deliver him up to his enemies in Poland. The kam, the pasha, and all the rest, swore by their heads, and called God to witness, that they detested such a horrible piece of treachery; and that they would shed the last drop of their blood rather than suffer even the least disrespect to be shown to the king in Poland; adding, that they had in their hands the Russian and Polish ambassadors whose lives should be answerable for any affront that should be offered to the King of Sweden. In fine, they complained bitterly that the king should entertain such injurious suspicions of those who had received and treated him with so much humanity and politeness.

Though oaths are frequently the language of treachery, Fabricius could not help being convinced of their sincerity. He thought he could discern in their protestations such an air of veracity as false-

* The whole of this account is related by M. Fabricius in his letters.

hood can, at best, but imperfectly imitate. He was sensible there had been a secret correspondence between the Kam of Tartary and Augustus but he was firmly persuaded that the only end of their negotiation was to oblige Charles XII. to quit the dominions of the Grand Seignior. Whether Fabricius was mistaken or not, he assured them he would represent to the king the injustice of his suspicions. "But," adds he, "do you intend to compel him to depart?" "Yes," says the pasha, "for such are the orders of our master." He then entreated them to consider seriously whether that order implied that they should shed the blood of a crowned head. "Yes," replies the kam, in a passion, "if that crowned head disobeys the Grand Seignior in his own dominions."

In the meantime, everything being ready for the assault, the death of Charles XII. seemed inevitable. But as the sultan had not given them positive orders to kill him in case of resistance, the pasha prevailed upon the kam to let him despatch an express to Adrianople, where the Grand Seignior then resided, to receive the last orders of his highness.

M. Jeffreys, and M. Fabricius having procured this short respite, hastened to acquaint the king with it. They came with all the eagerness of people who bring good news; but were received very coldly. He called them unsolicited mediators and still persisted in the belief that the sultan's order and the mufti's fetfa were both forged, inasmuch as they had sent to the Porte for fresh orders.

The English minister retired with a firm resolu-

tion to interfere no more in the affairs of a prince so very obstinate and inflexible. M. Fabricius, beloved by the king, and more accustomed to his humor than the English minister, remained with him and earnestly entreated him not to hazard so precious a life on such an unnecessary occasion.

For answer, the king showed him his fortifications and begged he would employ his good offices in procuring him some provisions. The Turks were easily prevailed upon to allow provisions to be conveyed to the king's camp until the return of the courier from Adrianople. The kam himself had strictly enjoined his Tartars, who were eager for pillage, not to make any attempt against the Swedes till the arrival of fresh orders, so that Charles XII. sometimes went out of his camp with forty horse and rode through the midst of the Tartars who, with great respect, left him a free passage. He even marched directly up to their lines which, instead of resisting, readily opened and allowed him to pass.

At last, the order of the Grand Seignior being come, to put to the sword all the Swedes that should make the least resistance, and not even to spare the life of the king, the pasha had the complaisance to show the order to M. Fabricius, with a view of inducing him to make his last effort to bend, if possible, the obstinacy of Charles. Fabricius went immediately to acquaint him with these sad tidings. "Have you seen the order you mention?" said the king. "I have," replied Fabricius. "Well then, go tell them in my name, that this second order is another forgery of theirs and that I will not depart." Fabricius threw himself at his

feet, fell into a passion, and reproached him with his obstinacy; but all to no purpose. "Go back to your Turks," said the king to him, smiling; "if they attack me, I know how to defend myself." The king's chaplains likewise fell upon their knees before him, conjuring him not to expose to certain death the unhappy remains of Poltava, and especially his own sacred person; assuring him, at the same time, that resistance in such a case was altogether unjustifiable and that it was a direct violation of all the laws of hospitality, to resolve to continue with strangers against their will; especially with those strangers who had so long and so generously supported him. The king, who had heard Fabricius with great patience, fell into a passion with his priests and told them that he had taken them to pray for him, and not to give him advice.

The generals Hord and Dardoff, who had always declared against hazarding a battle which could not fail to be attended with fatal consequences, showed the king their breasts covered with wounds which they had received in his service; and assuring him that they were ready to lay down their lives for his sake, begged that it might be, at least, upon a more necessary occasion. "I know," says Charles XII., "by your wounds and by my own, that we have fought valiantly together. You have hitherto done your duty; do it to-day likewise." Nothing now remained but to pay an implicit obedience to the king's command. Every one was ashamed not to court death with his sovereign. Charles, being now prepared for the assault, enjoyed in secret the pleasing thoughts that he should have the honor of

sustaining with three hundred Swedes the united efforts of a whole army. He assigned to every man his post. His chancellor, Mullern, and the secretary, Empreus, and his clerks, were to defend the chancery-house; Baron Fief, at the head of the officers of the kitchen, was stationed at another post. A third place was to be guarded by the grooms of the stable, and the cooks; for with him every one was a soldier. He rode from the intrenchments to his house, promising rewards to every one, creating officers, and assuring them that he would exalt the very meanest of his servants who should fight with courage and resolution, to the dignity of captains.

It was not long before they beheld the combined army of the Turks and Tartars advancing to attack this little camp with ten pieces of cannon and two mortars. The horses' tails waved in the air; the clarions sounded; the cries of "Alla, Alla," were heard on all sides. Baron Grothusen observing that the Turks did not mix in their cries any injurious reflections on the king, but only called him "Demirbash," i. e. head of iron, he instantly resolved to go out of the camp alone and unarmed; and having accordingly advanced to the lines of the janissaries most of whom had received money from him: "What then, my friends," says he to them, in their own language, "have you come to massacre three hundred defenceless Swedes? You brave janissaries who pardoned a hundred thousand Russians upon their crying 'Amman,' (i.e. pardon), have you forgotten the many favors you have received from us, and would you assassinate that great King of

Sweden for whom you have so great a regard, and from whom you have received so many presents? All he asks, my friends, is but the space of three days and the sultan's orders are not so strict as you are made to believe."

These words produced an effect which Grothusen himself could little have expected. The janissaries swore by their beards that they would not attack the king, but would grant him the three days he demanded. In vain was the signal given for the assault. The janissaries were so far from obeying that they threatened to fall upon their leaders, unless they would consent to grant three days to the King of Sweden. They came to the Pasha of Bender's tent, crying out that the sultan's orders were fictitious. To this unexpected sedition the pasha had nothing to oppose but patience.

He affected to be pleased with the generous resolution of the janissaries and ordered them to return to Bender. The Kam of Tartary, a man of headstrong and impetuous passions, would have given the assault immediately with his own troops but the pasha, unwilling that the Tartars should have all the honor of taking the king, while he perhaps might be punished for the disobedience of the janissaries, persuaded the kam to wait till the next day.

On his return to Bender, the pasha assembled all the officers of the janissaries, and the oldest soldiers, to whom he both read and showed the sultan's positive orders, and the mufti's fetfa. Sixty of the oldest of them, with venerable gray beards, who had received a thousand presents from the

king's hands, proposed to go to him in person, to entreat him to put himself into their hands, and to permit them to serve him as guards.

The pasha agreed to the proposal, as indeed there was no expedient he would not willingly have tried, rather than be reduced to the necessity of killing the king. Accordingly these sixty veterans repaired next morning to Varnitza, having nothing in their hands but long white rods, the only arms which the janissaries wear unless when they are going to fight; for the Turks consider the Christian custom of carrying swords in time of peace, and of entering armed into churches and the houses of their friends, as a barbarous practice.

They addressed themselves to Baron Grothusen, and Chancellor Mullern. They told them that they were come with a view to serve as faithful guards to the king; and that if he pleased they would conduct him to Adrianople where he might have a personal interview with the Grand Seignior. While they were making this proposal, the king read the letters which were brought from Constantinople, and which Fabricius who could no longer attend him in person, had sent him privately by a janissary. These letters were from Count Poniatowski who could neither serve him at Bender nor Adrianople, having been detained at Constantinople by order of the Porte, ever since the time of his making the imprudent demand of a thousand purses. He told the king that the sultan's orders to seize or massacre his royal person in case of resistance, were but too true; that indeed the sultan was imposed upon by his ministers; but the more he was im-

posed upon, he would, for that very reason, be the more faithfully obeyed: that he must submit to the times, and yield to necessity: that he took the liberty to advise him to try every expedient with the ministers by way of negotiations; not to be inflexible in a matter which required the gentlest management; and to expect from time and good policy a cure of that evil which by rash and violent measures would be rendered only incurable.

But neither the proposal of the old janissaries, nor Poniatowski's letters could convince the king that it was consistent with his honor to yield. He rather chose to perish by the hands of the Turks than in any respect to be made a prisoner. He dismissed the janissaries without condescending to see them, and sent them word, that if they did not immediately depart, he would shave their beards for them; an affront which in the Eastern countries is considered as the most intolerable of all others.

The old men, filled with the highest indignation, returned home, crying out as they went, "Ah this head of iron! since he will perish, let him perish." They gave the pasha an account of their commission and informed their comrades at Bender of the strange reception they had met with, upon which they all swore to obey the pasha's orders without delay, and were as impatient to go to the assault as they had been averse to it the day before.

The word of command was immediately given. The Turks marched up to the fortifications: the Tartars were already waiting for them, and the cannon began to play. The janissaries on the one side, and the Tartars on the other, instantly forced the

little camp. Hardly had twenty Swedes time to draw their swords when the whole three hundred were surrounded and taken prisoners without resistance. The king was then on horseback between his house and his camp, with the generals Hord, Dardoff and Sparre; and seeing that all his soldiers had suffered themselves to be taken prisoners before his eyes, he said, with great composure, to these three officers, "Come, let us go and defend the house; we will fight," adds he, with a smile, *"pro aris et focis."*

Accordingly, accompanied by these three generals, he forthwith gallops up to the house, in which he had placed about forty domestics as sentinels, and which he had fortified in the best manner he could.

The generals, accustomed as they were to the dauntless intrepidity of their master, could not help being surprised to see him resolve in cold blood and even with an air of pleasantry, to defend himself against ten pieces of cannon and a whole army: nevertheless they followed him, with some guards and domestics, making in all about twenty persons.

When they came to the door, they found it beset by the janissaries. Besides, two hundred Turks and Tartars had already entered by a window and made themselves masters of all the apartments except a large hall where the king's domestics had retired. Happily this hall was near the door at which the king designed to enter with his little troop of twenty persons. He threw himself off his horse with pistol and sword in hand, and his followers did the same.

The janissaries fell upon him on all sides. They

were animated with the promise which the pasha had made, of eight ducats of gold to every man who should only touch his clothes, in case they could take him. He wounded and killed all those who came near him. A janissary whom he wounded clapped his blunderbuss to his face, and had he not been jostled by the arm of a Turk, owing to the crowd that moved backwards and forwards, like waves, the king had certainly been killed. The ball grazed his nose, and carried off part of his ear, and then broke the arm of General Hord, whose constant fate it was to be wounded by his master's side.

The king plunged his sword into the janissary's breast. At the same time, his domestics who were shut up in the great hall, open the door to him. The king, with his little troop, springs in like an arrow. They instantly shut the door and barricade it with whatever they can find. Thus was Charles XII. shut up in this hall with all his attendants consisting of about sixty men, officers, guards, secretaries, valets de chambre, and domestics of every kind.

The janissaries and Tartars pillaged the rest of the house and filled the apartments. "Come," says the king, "let us go and drive out these barbarians;" and putting himself at the head of his men, he with his own hands opens the door of the hall that leads to his bed-chamber, rushes into the room and fires upon the plunderers.

The Turks, loaded with spoil, and terrified at the sudden appearance of the king whom they had ever been accustomed to respect, throw down their arms, leap out of the window, or fly to the cellars.

The king taking advantage of their confusion, and his own men being animated by the success of this attempt, they pursue the Turks from chamber to chamber; kill or wound those who had not made their escape; and in a quarter of an hour clear the house of the enemy.

In the heat of the fight the king perceived two janissaries who lay concealed under his bed; one of them he stabbed with his sword; the other asked pardon, by crying "Amman." "I give you your life," says the king to him, "on this condition: that you go and give the pasha a faithful account of what you have seen." The Turk readily promised to do as he was bidden, and was allowed to leap out of the window like the rest.

The Swedes, having at last made themselves masters of the house, again shut and barricaded the windows. They were in no want of arms. A ground-room full of muskets and powder had escaped the tumultuary search of the janissaries. These they employed to good purpose. They fired through the windows very close upon the Turks, of whom, in less than a few minutes they killed two hundred. The cannon still played upon the house; but the stones being very soft, there were only some holes made in the walls, and nothing was demolished.

The Kam of Tartary and the pasha, who were desirous of taking the king alive, being ashamed to lose so many men and to employ a whole army against sixty persons, thought it most advisable to set fire to the house in order to oblige the king to surrender. They ordered some arrows twisted

about with lighted matches, to be shot upon the roof and against the doors and windows. In a moment the house was in flames. The roof all on fire was ready to tumble upon the Swedes. The king with great calmness gave orders to extinguish the fire. Finding a small barrel full of liquor, he took it up, and being assisted by two Swedes, threw it upon the place where the fire was most violent. At last he recollected that the barrel was full of brandy, but the hurry inseparable from such a scene of confusion hindered him from thinking of it in time. The fire now raged with double fury. The king's apartment was reduced to ashes. The great hall where the Swedes were, was filled with a terrible smoke, mixed with sheets of flame that darted in at the doors of the neighboring apartments. One-half of the roof sank within the house; the other fell on the outside, cracking amidst the flames.

In this extremity, a sentinel called Walberg, ventured to cry that there was a necessity for surrendering. "What a strange man is this," says the king, "to imagine that it is not more glorious to be burnt than taken prisoner!" Another sentinel, named Rosen, had the presence of mind to observe that the chancery house which was not above fifty paces distant, had a stone roof and was proof against fire; that they ought to sally forth, take possession of that house, and then defend themselves to the last extremity. "There is a true Swede for you," cries the king, and embracing the sentinel, he made him a colonel upon the spot. "Come on, my friends," says he, "take as much powder and

ball with you as you can, and let us take possession of the chancery, sword in hand."

The Turks who all the while surrounded the house were struck with fear and admiration to see the Swedes continue in it, notwithstanding it was all in flames; but their astonishment was greatly increased when they saw the doors opened, and the king and his followers rushing out upon them like so many madmen. Charles and his principal officers were armed with sword and pistol. Every man fired two pistols at once the moment the doors were opened; and in the twinkling of an eye, throwing away their pistols, and drawing their swords, they made the Turks recoil above fifty paces. But in a moment after, this little troop was surrounded. The king who was booted as usual, entangled himself with his spurs, and fell. One and twenty janissaries at once spring upon him. He throws his sword into the air to save himself the mortification of surrendering it. The Turks bear him to the pasha's quarters, some taking hold of his arms, and others of his legs, in the same manner as sick persons are wont to be carried in order to prevent their being hurt.

No sooner did the king see himself in their hands, than the violence of his temper and the fury which such a long and desperate fight must have naturally inspired gave place at once to a mild and gentle behavior: not one word of impatience dropped from his lips; not one angry look was to be seen in his face. He eyed the janissaries with a smiling countenance, and they carried him off crying "Alla," with a mixture of respect and indignation. His

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officers were taken at the same time and stripped by the Turks and Tartars. It was on the twelfth of February, 1713, that this strange event happened; an event that was followed with very remarkable consequences.*

* M. Norberg, who was not present at this adventure, has in this particular part of his history, only copied the account of M. de Voltaire; but he has mangled it; he has suppressed some interesting circumstances, and has not been able to justify the temerity of Charles XII. All that he has been able to advance against M. de Voltaire with regard to the affair of Bender, is reducible to the adventure of the Sieur Fredericus, valet de chambre to the King of Sweden, who, according to some, was burnt in the king's house, and according to others, was cut in two by the Tartars. La Motraye alleges likewise, that the King of Sweden did not use these words, "We will fight *pro aris et focis.*" But M. Fabricus, who was present, affirms that the king did pronounce these words; that La Motraye was not near enough to hear them; and that if he had been, he was not capable of comprehending their meaning, as he did not understand a word of Latin.

CHAPTER VII.

The Turks convey Charles to Démirtash. King Stanislaus is taken at the same time. Bold undertaking of M. de Villelongue. Revolutions in the Seraglio. Battle in Pomerania. Altena burnt by the Swedes. Charles at last sets out on his return to his own dominions. His strange manner of travelling: His arrival at Stralsund: His misfortunes. Successes of Peter the Great: His triumphant entry into St. Petersburg.

The Pasha of Bender, with great gravity, waited for Charles in his tent, attended by one Marco, an interpreter. He received his majesty in a most respectful manner and entreated him to repose himself on a sofa; but the king, who did not so much as take notice of the Turk's civilities, continued standing.

"Blessed be the Almighty," says the pasha, "that your majesty is alive: I am extremely sorry that your majesty obliged me to execute the orders of his highness." The king, who was only vexed that his three hundred soldiers should have suffered themselves to be taken in their intrenchments, said to the pasha: "Ah! had they defended themselves as they ought, you would not have been able to force our camp in ten days." "Alas!" says the Turk, "that so much courage should be so ill employed!" He ordered the king to be conducted back to Bender on a horse richly caparisoned. All the Swedes were either killed or taken prisoners. All Charles's

equipage, his goods, his papers, and most necessary utensils, were either plundered or burnt. One might have seen in the public roads the Swedish officers, almost naked, and chained together in pairs, following the Tartars or janissaries on foot. The chancellor and the general officers did not meet with a milder fate: they were the slaves of the soldiers to whose share they had fallen.

Ismael Pasha having conducted Charles to his seraglio at Bender, gave him his own apartment, and ordered him to be served like a king; but not without taking the precaution to plant a guard of janissaries at the chamber door. A bed was prepared for him; but he threw himself down upon a sofa, booted as he was, and fell fast asleep. An officer, that stood near him in waiting, covered his head with a cap; but the king, upon awaking from his first sleep, threw it off; and the Turk was surprised to see a sovereign prince sleeping in his boots and bareheaded. Next morning, Ismael introduced Fabricius into the king's chamber. Fabricius found his majesty with his clothes torn; his boots, his hands, and his whole body, covered with dust and blood, and his eyebrows burnt; but still maintaining, in this terrible condition, a placid and cheerful look. Fabricius fell upon his knees before him, without being able to utter a word; but soon recovering from his surprise by the free and easy manner in which the king addressed him, he resumed his wonted familiarity with him, and they began to talk of the battle of Bender with great humor and pleasantry. "It is reported," says Fabricius, "that your majesty killed twenty janissaries

with your own hand." "Well, well," replies the king, "a story, you know, never loses in the telling." During this conversation, the pasha presented to the king his favorite Grothusen, and Colonel Ribbins, whom he had had the generosity to redeem at his own expense. Fabricius undertook to ransom the other prisoners.

Jeffreys, the English envoy, joined his endeavors with those of Fabricius, in order to procure the money necessary for this purpose. A Frenchman, who had come to Bender out of mere curiosity, and who wrote a short account of these transactions, gave all that he had; and these strangers, assisted by the interest, and even by the money, of the pasha, redeemed not only the officers, but likewise their clothes, from the hands of the Turks and Tartars.

Next day the king was conducted, as a prisoner, in a chariot covered with scarlet, towards Adrianople. His treasurer, Grothusen, was with him. Chancellor Mullern and some officers followed in another carriage. Several were on horseback; and when they cast their eyes on the king's chariot, they could not refrain from tears. The pasha was at the head of the convoy: Fabricius told him that it was a shame the king should want a sword and begged he would give him one. "God forbid," says the pasha, "he would cut our beards for us if he had a sword." However, he gave him one a few hours after.

While they were conducting this king, disarmed and a prisoner, who, but a few years before, had given law to so many states, and had seen himself the arbiter of the North and the terror of Europe,

there appeared in the same place another instance of the frailty of human greatness.

King Stanislaus had been seized in the Turkish dominions and they were now carrying him a prisoner to Bender, at the very time that they were removing Charles from it.

Stanislaus, being no longer supported by the hand which had raised him to the throne, and finding himself destitute of money, and consequently of interest in Poland, had retired at first into Pomerania; and, unable to preserve his own kingdom, he had done all that lay in his power to defend that of his benefactor; he had even gone to Sweden, in order to hasten the reinforcements that were so much wanted in Livonia and Pomerania. In a word, he had done everything that could be expected from the friend of Charles XII. About this time, the first king of Prussia, a prince of great prudence, being justly apprehensive of danger from the too near neighborhood of the Muscovites, thought proper to enter into a league with Augustus and the republic of Poland, in order to send back the Russians to their own country, and he hoped to engage the King of Sweden himself in this project. From this plan, three great events were expected to result; the peace of the North, the return of Charles to his own kingdom, and the establishment of a strong barrier against the Russians whose power had already become formidable to Europe. The preliminary article of this treaty, upon which the public tranquillity depended, was the abdication of Stanislaus who not only accepted the proposal, but even undertook to use his endeav-

ors in bringing about a peace which deprived him of his crown. To this step he was prompted by necessity, the public good, the glory of the sacrifice, and the interest of Charles XII. He wrote to Bender. He explained to the King of Sweden the desperate situation of his affairs and the only effectual remedy that could be applied. He conjured him not to oppose an abdication which was rendered necessary by the strange conjunctures of the times, and honorable by the noble motive from which it proceeded. He entreated him not to sacrifice the interests of Sweden to those of an unhappy friend, who cheerfully preferred the public good to his own private happiness. Charles XII. received these letters at Varnitza. He said to the courier in a passion, in presence of several witnesses: "If my friend will not be a king, I can easily find another that will."

Stanislaus was obstinately bent on making the sacrifice which Charles opposed. These times seem to have been destined by providence to produce strange sentiments, and still stranger actions. Stanislaus resolved to go himself, and endeavor to prevail upon Charles; and thus he ran a greater risk in abdicating the throne, than he had ever done in obtaining it. One evening about six o'clock, he stole from the Swedish army, which he commanded in Pomerania, and set out, in company with Baron Sparre and another colonel, the former of whom has since been an ambassador in France and England. He assumed the name of a French gentleman, called Haran, who was then a major in the Swedish army, and lately died commander of Dant-

zic. He passed close by the whole army of the enemy; was sometimes stopped, and as often released by virtue of a passport which he got in the name of Haran. At length, after many perils and dangers, he arrived on the frontier of Turkey.

As soon as he had reached Moldavia, he sent Baron Sparre back to the army, and entered Yassy, the capital of Moldavia, thinking himself perfectly secure in a country where the King of Sweden had been treated with so much respect, and not entertaining the least suspicion of what had happened.

The Moldavians asked him who he was. He said he was major of a regiment in the service of Charles XII. At the bare mention of that name he was seized, and carried before the hospodar of Moldavia, who, having already learned from the gazettes that Stanislaus had privately withdrawn from his army, began to suspect that this was probably the man. He had heard the king's figure described so exactly, that it was very easy to discover the resemblance; an open and engaging countenance, and a very uncommon air of sweetness.

The hospodar examined him, put to him a great many captious questions, and at last asked him what commission he bore in the Swedish army. Their conversation was carried on in Latin. *"Major sum,"* says Stanislaus. *"Imo maximus es,"* replies the Moldavian; and immediately presenting him with a chair of state, he treated him like a king; but still like a king who was a prisoner, placing a strict guard about a Greek convent, in which he was obliged to remain, till such time as the sultan's

orders should arrive. At length these orders came, importing that Stanislaus should be carried to Bender, from which Charles XII. had just been removed.

The news of this event was brought to the pasha, at the time he was accompanying the King of Sweden's chariot. The pasha communicated the particulars to Fabricius, who, coming up to Charles's chariot, told him he was not the only king that was a prisoner in the hands of the Turks; and that Stanislaus was but a few miles off, under a guard of soldiers. "Run to him, my dear Fabricius," says Charles, without being in the least disconcerted, "tell him never to make a peace with Augustus, and assure him that our affairs will soon take another turn." So much was Charles wedded to his own opinions that, abandoned as he was in Poland, attacked in his own dominions, a captive in a Turkish litter, and led a prisoner without knowing whither they were carrying him, he still reckoned on the favor of fortune, and hoped the Ottoman Porte would assist him with a hundred thousand men. Fabricius hastened to execute his commission, attended by a janissary, having first obtained leave from the pasha. A few miles distant he met the body of soldiers that conducted Stanislaus. He addressed himself to a person that rode in the midst of them, clad in a French dress and but indifferently mounted; and asked him in the German tongue, where the King of Poland was. The person to whom he spoke happened to be Stanislaus himself, whose features he could not recollect under this disguise. "What!" says the king, "don't you know

me?" Fabricius then informed him of the wretched condition in which the King of Sweden was; but added, that his resolutions, however unsuccessful, were as determined as ever.

As Stanislaus was drawing near to Bender, the pasha, who had returned thither after having accompanied Charles for some miles, sent the King of Poland an Arabian horse, with a magnificent harness.

He was received at Bender amidst a discharge of the artillery; and, excepting his confinement from which he was not as yet delivered, he had no great cause to complain of his treatment.* Meanwhile Charles was on his way to Adrianople. Nothing was talked of in that town but his late battle. The Turks at once condemned and admired him; but the divan was so provoked, that they threatened to confine him in one of the islands of the archipelago.

Stanislaus, King of Poland, from whom I had the honor to receive the greatest part of these particulars, assured me likewise, that a proposal was made in the divan for confining him in one of the islands of Greece; but the Grand Seignior being mollified, a few months after allowed him to depart.

M. Desaleurs, who could have taken his part, and could have prevented the Turks from offer-

* The good chaplain, Norberg, alleges that we are here guilty of a manifest contradiction, in supposing that King Stanislaus was at once detained a prisoner, and treated as a king, at Bender. What! had not the poor man discernment enough to perceive that it is very possible for a person, at one and the same time, to be loaded with honors and deprived of his liberty?

ing such an affront to all Christian kings, was at Constantinople; as was likewise M. Poniatowski, whose fertile and enterprising genius the divan had always dreaded. Most of the Swedes at Adrianople were in prison; and the sultan's throne seemed to be inaccessible to any complaints of the King of Sweden.

The Marquis de Fierville, who had resided with Charles at Bender as a private agent of France, was then at Adrianople. He undertook to do that prince a piece of service, at a time when he was abandoned or oppressed by all the world besides. In this design he was happily assisted by a French gentleman, of an ancient family in Champagne, called Villelongue, a man of great courage, but who, not having a fortune equal to his spirit, and charmed with the fame of the King of Sweden, had repaired to Turkey with a view of entering into the service of that prince.

With the assistance of this young man, M. de Fierville wrote a memorial in the King of Sweden's name, in which he made his majesty demand satisfaction of the sultan for the insult which, in his person, had been offered to all crowned heads, and for the treachery, real or supposed, of the Kam and Pasha of Bender.

In this memorial he accused the vizier and other ministers of having received bribes from the Russians, imposed upon the Grand Seignior, intercepted the king's letters to his highness, and of having, by their artifices, extorted from the sultan an order so contrary to the hospitality of Mussulmans, by which, in direct violation of the laws of nations,

and in a manner so unworthy of a great emperor, they had attacked, with twenty thousand men, a king who had none but his domestics to defend him, and who relied upon the sacred word of the sultan.

When this memorial was drawn up, it was to be translated into the Turkish language, and written in a particular hand, and upon a certain kind of paper, which is always used in addresses to the sultan.

For this purpose, they applied to several French interpreters in the town; but the affairs of the King of Sweden were in such a desperate situation, and the vizier was so much his declared enemy, that not a single interpreter would undertake the task. At last they found a stranger, whose hand was not known at the Porte, who, having received a handsome gratuity, and being fully assured of the most profound secrecy, translated the memorial into the Turkish tongue, and wrote it upon the right kind of paper. Baron d'Arvidson, a Swedish officer, counterfeited the king's signature. Fierville, who had the royal signet, appended it to the writing; and the whole was sealed with the arms of Sweden. Villelongue undertook to deliver it into the hands of the Grand Seignior, as he went to the mosque, according to his usual custom. The same methods had been frequently employed for presenting memorials to the sultan against his ministers; but that very circumstance rendered the success of this enterprise the more precarious, and the danger of the attempt the more imminent.

The vizier, who plainly foresaw that the Swedes

would demand justice of the sultan, and who, from the unhappy fate of his predecessors, had but too many warnings to provide for his own safety, had given peremptory orders to allow no one to approach the Grand Seignior's person, but to seize all such as should be about the mosque with petitions in their hands.

Villelongue was well apprised of this order, and at the same time knew, that, by breaking it, he ran the risk of losing his head. He therefore laid aside his Frank's dress, and put on a Grecian habit; and concealing the letter in his bosom, repaired betimes to the neighborhood of the mosque to which the Grand Seignior resorted. He counterfeited the madman, and dancing between two files of janissaries, through which the sultan was to pass, he purposely let some pieces of money drop from his pockets, as if by chance, in order to amuse the guards.

When the sultan was drawing near, the guards endeavored to remove Villelongue out of the way; but he fell on his knees and struggled with the janissaries. At last his cap fell off, and he was discovered by his long hair to be a Frank. He received several blows, and was very roughly handled. The Grand Seignior, who was at no great distance, heard the scuffle, and asked the cause of it. Villelongue cried out with all his might, "Amman! Amman!" "Mercy!" pulling the letter at the same time out of his bosom. The sultan ordered the guards to let him approach. Villelongue instantly runs up to him, embraces his stirrups, and presents the memorial, saying, *"Sued crall dan,"* "The King

of Sweden gives it thee." The sultan put the letter in his bosom, and proceeded to the mosque. Meantime Villelongue was secured, and imprisoned in one of the exterior apartments of the seraglio.

The sultan having read the letter upon his leaving the mosque, resolved to examine the prisoner himself. This perhaps will appear somewhat incredible: nothing, however, is here advanced, but what is vouched for by the letters of M. de Villelongue; and surely, when so brave an officer affirms anything upon his honor, he merits, at least, some credit. He assured me then that the sultan laid aside his imperial garb and turban, and disguised himself like an officer of the janissaries, a thing which he frequently does. He brought along with him an old man, of the island of Malta, as an interpreter. By favor of this disguise, Villelongue enjoyed an honor which no Christian ambassador ever obtained. He had a private conference with the Turkish emperor for a quarter of an hour. He did not fail to represent the wrongs which the King of Sweden had suffered, to accuse the ministers, and to demand satisfaction; and all this with so much the more freedom, as in talking to the sultan he was only supposed to be talking to his equal. He could easily discover, notwithstanding the darkness of the prison, that it was no other than the Turkish Sultan himself; but this discovery only made him speak with the greater boldness. The pretended officer of the janissaries said to Villelongue: "Christian, be assured, that the sultan, my master, has the soul of an emperor; and that your King of Sweden, if he has reason on his side,

shall obtain justice." Villelongue was soon set at liberty; and in a few weeks after a sudden change took place in the seraglio, owing, as the Swedes affirm, to this conference alone. The mufti was deposed; the Kam of Tartary was banished to Rhodes; and the Serasquier Pasha of Bender was confined in one of the islands of the archipelago.

The Ottoman Porte is so subject to these revolutions, that it is hard to say, whether the sultan really meant to gratify the King of Sweden by these sacrifices. From the treatment which that prince received, it cannot surely be inferred that the Porte had any great inclination to oblige him.

The favorite, Ali Coumourgi, was suspected of having brought about all these changes, in order to serve his own particular views. The Kam of Tartary and the Serasquier of Bender were said to have been banished for giving the king the twelve hundred purses, in contradiction to the express orders of the Grand Seignior. Coumourgi raised to the throne of Tartary the brother of the deposed kam, a young man of his own age, who had little regard for his brother, and upon whom the favorite depended greatly in prosecuting the wars he had already planned. With respect to the grand vizier Jussuf, he was not deposed till some weeks after; and the title of prime vizier was bestowed on Pasha Soliman.

Truth obliges me to declare, that M. de Villelongue and several Swedes assured me, that all these great revolutions at the Porte were entirely owing to the letter which was presented to the sultan in the king's name; whereas M. de Fierville

is of a quite contrary opinion. I have sometimes found the like contradictions in such memorials as have been submitted to my perusal. In all these cases, it is the duty of a historian honestly to narrate the plain matter of fact, without endeavoring to dive into the motives; and to confine himself to the relation of what he does know, instead of indulging his fancy in vague conjectures about what he does not know.

Meanwhile Charles XII. was conducted to the little castle of Démirtash, in the neighborhood of Adrianople. An innumerable multitude of people had crowded to this place to see the arrival of his majesty, who was carried from his chariot to the castle on a sofa; but Charles, in order to conceal himself from the view of the populace, put a cushion upon his head.

The Porte was strongly solicited to allow him to reside at Demotica, a little town six leagues from Adrianople, and near the famous river Hebrus, now called Merizza; but it was not till after several days that they granted his request. "Go," says Coumourgi to the grand vizier, Soliman, "and tell the King of Sweden, that he may stay at Demotica all his life long, if he pleases; but I will answer for him, that, in less than a year, he will want to be gone of his own accord; take care, however, not to give him any money."

Thus was the king conveyed to the little town of Demotica, where the Porte allotted him a considerable quantity of provisions for himself and his retinue. But all the money they would grant him was five and twenty crowns a day, to buy pork and

wine, two kinds of provisions which the Turks never furnish to others. The allowance of five hundred crowns a day, which he had enjoyed at Bender, was entirely withdrawn.

Hardly had he reached Demotica with his little court, when the grand vizier, Soliman, was deposed; and his place filled by Ibrahim Molla, a man of a high spirit, of great courage, and unpolished manners. It may not be amiss to give a short sketch of his history, so that the reader may be the better acquainted with the characters of all those viceroys of the Ottoman Empire upon whom the fortune of Charles so long depended.

He had been a common sailor till the accession of the Sultan Achmet III. This emperor frequently disguised himself in the habit of a private man, of a priest, or a dervish; and slipped in the evening into the coffee-houses and other public places of Constantinople, to hear what the people said of him, and what were their opinions concerning the affairs of state. One day he overheard this Molla complaining that the Turkish ships never took any prizes, and swearing that if he were captain of a ship, he would never enter the port of Constantinople without bringing some vessel of the infidels along with him. Next day the Grand Seignior gave him the command of a ship, and sent him on a cruise. The new captain returned in a few days, with a Maltese bark and a galley of Genoa. In two years' time he was appointed captain-general of the navy, and at last grand vizier. As soon as he had attained his new post, he thought he could easily dispense with the interest of the favorite. In

order to render himself the more necessary, he formed a scheme for commencing a war against the Russians; and with this view pitched a tent not far from the place where the King of Sweden resided.

He invited his majesty to come and see him, with the new Kam of Tartary, and the French ambassador. The king, whose pride rose with his misfortunes, considered it as a most intolerable affront for a subject to send him an invitation. He ordered his Chancellor Mullern to go in his place; and, lest the Turks should not pay him that respect which was due to his royal person, or oblige him to condescend to anything beneath his dignity, Charles, who was ever in extremes, took to his bed, which he resolved not to leave during his abode at Demotica. This resolution he kept for ten months, under pretence of sickness; Chancellor Mullern, Grothusen, and Colonel Dubens, being the only persons that were admitted to his table. They had none of the conveniences with which the Franks are usually provided: all these they had lost at Bender; consequently it could not be expected that their meals were served with much pomp or elegance. In effect, they were obliged to serve themselves; and, during the whole time, Chancellor Mullern was cook in ordinary.

While Charles XII. was thus passing his time in bed, he received the disagreeable news of the desolation of all his provinces, that lay without the limits of Sweden.

General Stenbock, who had rendered himself illustrious by chasing the Danes out of Scania, and beating their best troops with a parcel of peasants,

still maintained the glory of the Swedish arms. He defended Pomerania, Bremen, and the king's possessions in Germany, as long as he was able; but could not hinder the combined army of the Danes and Saxons from besieging Stade, a town of great strength and importance, situated on the banks of the Elbe, in the duchy of Bremen. The town was bombarded and reduced to ashes; and the garrison obliged to surrender at discretion, before Stenbock could come to their assistance.

This general, who had about twelve thousand men, of whom the one-half were cavalry, pursued the enemy, who were twice as numerous, and at last overtook them in the duchy of Mecklenburg, at a place called Gadebusch, near a river of the same name. It was on the 20th of December, 1712, that he came in sight of the Danes and Saxons. He was separated from them by a morass. The enemy were so posted as to have this morass in front, and a wood in their rear: they had the advantage of number and situation; and their camp was utterly inaccessible, except across the morass, which the Swedes could not pass without being exposed to the fire of the enemy's artillery.

Notwithstanding these difficulties, Stenbock passed the morass at the head of his troops, advanced against the enemy in order of battle, and began one of the most desperate and bloody engagements that ever took place between these rival nations. After a sharp conflict for three hours, the Danes and Saxons were entirely routed, and obliged to quit the field of battle.

It was in this battle that a son of Augustus, by

the Countess of Königsmarck, known by the name of Count Saxe, served his apprenticeship in the art of war. This is the same Count Saxe, who had afterwards the honor to be chosen Duke of Courland, and who wanted nothing but power to put himself in possession of the most incontestable right which any man can have to sovereignty; I mean the unanimous consent of the people. In fine, this is the man who has since acquired a more solid glory by saving France at the battle of Fontenoy, conquering Flanders, and meriting the character of the greatest general of the age. He commanded a regiment at Gadebusch, and had a horse killed under him. I have heard him say, that all the Swedes kept their ranks; and that, even after the victory was gained, and the first lines of these brave troops saw their enemies lying dead at their feet, there was not so much as a single Swede that durst stoop to strip them till prayers had been read in the field of battle; so inflexibly did they adhere to that strict discipline which their king had taught them.

After the victory, Stenbock, remembering that the Danes had laid Stade in ashes, resolved to retaliate on Altena, a town belonging to the King of Denmark. Altena stands below Hamburg, on the banks of the Elbe, which can convey ships of considerable burden into its harbor. The King of Denmark had indulged this town with many privileges, hoping to make it, one day, a place of great trade; and indeed the industry of the inhabitants, encouraged by the prudent measures of the king, had already raised them to such opulence that Altena

began to be reckoned in the number of rich and commercial cities. Hamburg grew jealous of this rival in trade, and earnestly wished for its destruction. When Stenbock came in sight of Altena, he sent a trumpeter to inform the inhabitants that they might retire with as many of their effects as they could carry off, for that he meant to raze their town to the foundation.

The magistrates came and threw themselves at his feet, and offered him a hundred thousand crowns by way of ransom. Stenbock demanded two hundred thousand. The inhabitants begged that they might have time at least, to send to their correspondents at Hamburg, assuring him that next day the money should be paid him; but the Swedish general replied, that they must give it instantly, or he would immediately set Altena in flames.

His troops were already in the suburbs, with torches in their hands. The town had no other defence but a poor wooden gate, and a ditch already filled up. The wretched inhabitants were therefore obliged to leave their houses at midnight, on the 9th of January, 1713. The rigor of the season, which was then excessive, was still further increased by a strong north wind, which served at once to spread the flames through the town, with greater violence, and to render the miseries of the poor people, who were exposed in the open fields, the more intolerable. Men and women, weeping and wailing, and bending under their heavy loads, fled to the neighboring hills, which were covered with snow. The palsied old men were transported on the shoulders of the young. Some women,

newly delivered, fled with their tender babes in their arms, and perished together on the naked rock, turning their languishing eyes towards their dear country, which was now wrapped in flames. The Swedes set fire to the town, before the inhabitants had entirely left it. The conflagration continued from midnight till ten in the morning. The houses, being mostly of wood, were entirely consumed; and next day there was not the least vestige of a town remaining.

The aged, the sick, and women of tender constitutions, who had lodged on the snow while their houses were in flames, at last made a shift to crawl to the gates of Hamburg, where they besought the inhabitants to receive them within the walls, and thereby to save their lives. But this favor was denied them, because some contagious distempers were known lately to have raged in Altena; and the Hamburgers had not so great a regard for the inhabitants, as to run the risk of having their own town infected by admitting such dangerous guests. Thus the greatest part of these unhappy people expired under the walls of Hamburg, calling on heaven to witness the barbarity of the Swedes, and the still greater inhumanity of the Hamburgers.

All Germany exclaimed against this outrage. The ministers and generals of Poland and Denmark wrote to Count Stenbock, reproaching him with an act of cruelty, committed without necessity, and incapable of any excuse, which could not fail to provoke heaven and earth against him.

Stenbock replied that he never would have pushed matters to such extremities, had it not been

with a view to teach the enemies of the king his master, not to make war, for the future, like barbarians, but to pay some regard to the laws of nations; that they had filled Pomerania with their cruelties, laid waste that beautiful province, and sold nearly a hundred thousand of its inhabitants to the Turks; and that the torches which had laid Altena in ashes were no more than just reprisals for the red-hot bullets which had destroyed Stade.

Such was the implacable resentment with which the Swedes and their enemies carried on the war. Had Charles appeared in Pomerania at this time, he might possibly have retrieved his ruined fortune. His armies, though removed at so great a distance from his person, were still animated by his spirit; but the absence of a prince is always prejudicial to his affairs, and hinders his subjects from making the proper use of their victories. Stenbock lost piece-meal what he had gained by those signal actions, which, at a happier juncture, would have been decisive.

Victorious as he was, he could not prevent the junction of the Russians, Danes, and Saxons. The combined army of these allies seized upon his quarters. He lost some troops in several little skirmishes. Two thousand of his men were drowned in passing the Eider, as they were going to their winter-quarters in Holstein; and all these losses, in a country surrounded on every side by powerful enemies, were utterly irreparable.

He endeavored to defend the duchy of Holstein against the Danes; but, notwithstanding all his prudent measures and vigorous efforts, the country

was lost, his whole army ruined, and himself taken prisoner.

Pomerania, all but Stralsund, the isle of Rügen, and some neighboring places, being left defenceless, became a prey to the allies, and were sequestered in the hands of the King of Prussia. Bremen was filled with Danish garrisons. At the same time, the Russians overran Finland and beat the Swedes, who, being now dispersed and inferior in point of number, began to lose that superiority over their enemies which they had possessed at the commencement of the war.

To complete the misfortunes of Sweden, the king resolved to stay at Demotica, and still flattered himself with the delusive hopes of obtaining assistance from the Turks, in whom he ought no longer to have reposed any confidence.

Ibrahim Molla, that bold vizier, who had been so obstinately bent on a war with the Russians, in opposition to the favorite, was strangled in one of the passages of the seraglio.

The place of vizier had become so dangerous, that no one would venture to accept it; and in consequence it continued vacant for six months. At last the favorite, Ali Coumourgi, assumed the title of grand vizier. This measure gave a fatal blow to all the hopes of the King of Sweden, who knew Coumourgi so much the better, because he had really been obliged to him for some friendly offices, when the interest of the favorite and that of his majesty happened to coincide.

Charles had now been eleven months at Demotica, buried in sloth and oblivion. This ex-

treme indolence succeeding so suddenly to the most violent exercises, had at last given him the disease which he had formerly feigned. The report of his death was spread over all Europe. The council of regency, which he had established at Stockholm when he left his capital, no longer received any despatches from him. The senate came in a body to the Princess Ulrica Eleonora, the king's sister, and entreated her to take the regency into her own hands, during her brother's absence. She accepted the proposal; but finding that the senate intended to force her to make a peace with the czar and the King of Denmark, and well knowing that her brother would never approve of such a measure, she resigned the regency, and wrote a full and circumstantial account of the whole matter to the king, in Turkey.

Charles received his sister's packet at Demotica. The arbitrary principles which he had sucked in with his mother's milk, made him forget that Sweden had formerly been a free state, and that, in ancient times, the management of public affairs was conducted by the king and senate, in conjunction. He considered that respectable body as no better than a parcel of menial servants, who wanted to usurp the command of the house in their master's absence. He wrote to them, that if they pretended to assume the reins of government, he would send them one of his boots, from which he would oblige them to receive their orders.

To prevent, therefore, these attempts (as he thought them) upon his authority in Sweden, and to defend his kingdom now in the last extremity,

deprived of all hopes of assistance from the Ottoman Porte, and relying on himself alone, he signified to the grand vizier his desire of departing, and returning by the way of Germany.

M. Desaleurs, the French ambassador, who was charged with the affairs of Sweden, made the proposal. "Well," says the vizier to Count Desaleurs, "did I not tell you, that in less than a year the King of Sweden would beg it as a favor, to be allowed to depart? Tell him he may either go or stay as he pleases; but let him come to a fixed resolution, and appoint the day of his departure, that he may not again bring us into such another scrape as that of Bender."

Count Desaleurs softened the harshness of this answer, when he reported it to the King. The day was accordingly fixed. But, before he would quit Turkey, Charles resolved to display the pomp of a great king, though involved in all the difficulties of a fugitive prince. He gave Grothusen the title of his ambassador extraordinary, and sent him with a retinue of eighty persons, all richly dressed, to take his leave in form at the Porte.

The splendor of this embassy was only exceeded by the meanness of the shifts which the king was obliged to employ, in order to collect a sum of money sufficient to defray the expenses of it.

M. Desaleurs lent him forty thousand crowns. Grothusen had agents at Constantinople, who borrowed in his name, at the rate of fifty per cent. interest, a thousand crowns of a Jew, two hundred pistoles of an English merchant, and a thousand livres of a Turk.

By these means they procured wherewithal to enable them to act the splendid farce of the Swedish embassy before the divan. Grothusen received at the Porte all the honors that are usually paid to ambassadors extraordinary on the day of their audience. The design of all this parade was only to obtain money from the grand vizier; but that minister was inexorable.

Grothusen made a proposal for borrowing a million from the Porte. The vizier answered coldly, that his master knew how to give, when he thought proper; but that it was beneath his dignity to lend: that the king should be supplied with plenty of everything necessary for his journey, in a manner worthy of the person that sent him back; and that the Porte, perhaps, might even make him a present in gold bullion, though he would not have him depend upon it for certain.

At last, on the first day of October, 1714, the King of Sweden set out on his journey. A capigi pasha, with six chiaoux, came to attend him from the castle of Démirtash, where he had resided for some days past. The pasha presented him, in the name of the Grand Seignior, with a large tent of scarlet embroidered with gold, a sabre, the handle of which was set with jewels, and eight beautiful Arabian horses, with fine saddles, and stirrups of massy gold. It is not beneath the dignity of history to observe that the Arabian groom, who took care of the horses, gave the king an account of their genealogy; a custom which has long prevailed among these people, who seem to be more attentive to the nobility of horses than of men; which

after all, perhaps, is not so unreasonable, as these animals, if the breed is kept free from intermixture, are never known to degenerate.

The convoy consisted of sixty loaded wagons, and three hundred horse. The capigi pasha being informed that several Turks had lent money to the King of Sweden's attendants at an immoderate interest, told his majesty that usury was forbidden by the Mahometan law; he therefore entreated him to liquidate all these debts, and to order his resident at Constantinople to pay no more than the capital. "No," says the king, "if any of my servants have given bills for a hundred crowns, I will pay them, though they should not even have received ten."

He made a proposal to his creditors to follow him, assuring them at the same time, that he would not only pay their debts, but likewise indemnify them for the expense of the journey. Several of them went to Sweden; and Grothusen was commissioned to see them paid.

In order to show the greater deference to their royal guest, the Turks made him travel by very short stages; but this slow and respectful motion was ill-suited to the impatient spirit of the king. During the journey, he got up at three in the morning, according to his usual custom. As soon as he was dressed, he went himself and awakened the capigi and chiaoux, and began to march in the dark. The Turkish gravity was affronted with this new manner of travelling; but Charles took pleasure in making them uneasy, and said, that he

should at least be a little revenged on them for their behavior to him at Bender.

About the time that Charles reached the frontiers of Turkey, Stanislaus was leaving them, though by a different road, and going into Germany, with a view of retiring into the duchy of Deux-Ponts, a province bordering on the palatinate of Alsace and the Rhine, and which has belonged to the kings of Sweden ever since Charles X., the successor of Christina, united it to his crown. Charles assigned Stanislaus the revenue of this duchy, which was then valued at about seventy thousand crowns. Such was the final result of so many projects, wars, and expectations! Stanislaus both could and would have concluded an advantageous treaty with Augustus, had not the inflexible obstinacy of Charles made him lose his lands and real estate in Poland, in order to preserve the empty title of king.

This prince continued to reside in the duchy of Deux-Ponts till the death of Charles XII. when that province returning to a prince of the Palatine family, he chose to retire to Weissenburg, a place belonging to the French in Alsace. M. Sum, Augustus's envoy, entered a complaint on this head to the Duke of Orleans, regent of France. The duke made him this remarkable answer: "Sir, let the king your master know, that France has never refused an asylum to kings in distress."

When the King of Sweden arrived on the frontiers of Germany, he had the pleasure to hear, that the emperor had given strict orders to receive him in every part of his dominions with a becoming

magnificence. The towns and villages through which the quartermasters had previously fixed his route, made great preparations for receiving him; every one burned with impatience to see this extraordinary man, whose victories and misfortunes, whose most trifling actions, and even his keeping his bed, had made so great a noise in Europe and Asia. But Charles had no inclination to bear the fatigue of all this pomp and pageantry, or to exhibit as a public spectacle the prisoner of Bender. On the contrary, he had resolved never to re-enter Stockholm, until he should have repaired his losses by a change of fortune.

As soon as he arrived at Targowitz, on the confines of Transylvania, he took leave of his Turkish convoy; and then assembling his attendants in a barn, he told them not to give themselves any concern about him, but to proceed with all possible expedition to Stralsund in Pomerania, on the coast of the Baltic, distant from Targowitz about three hundred leagues.

He took nobody along with him but During, and parted cheerfully from the rest of his attendants, who were filled with astonishment, sorrow, and apprehension. By way of disguise, he put on a black wig concealing his own hair which he wore underneath it, a gold-laced hat, a gray coat, and blue cloak, and assuming the name of a German officer, rode post with his two fellow-travellers.

He shunned, as much as possible, the territories of his secret or declared enemies, taking the road through Hungary, Moravia, Austria, Bavaria, Würtemberg, the Palatinate, Westphalia, and

Mecklenburg; by which means he almost made the complete tour of Germany, and lengthened his journey by one-half. Having ridden the whole first day, without intermission, young During, who was not so much inured to these excessive fatigues, fainted away as he was dismounting. The king, who was determined not to halt a moment by the road, asked During as soon as he had recovered, how much money he had? "About a thousand crowns in gold," replies During. "Then give me one-half of it," says the king, "I see you are not able to follow me, I shall finish the journey by myself." During begged he would be so good as to tarry but for three hours, assuring him, that by that time he should be able to remount his horse and attend his majesty, and entreated him to reflect on the imminent dangers to which he would expose himself by travelling alone. The king was inexorable. He made him give him the five hundred crowns, and called for horses. During, startled at this resolution, bethought himself of an innocent stratagem. He took the postmaster aside, and pointing to the king: "This gentleman," says he, "is my cousin; we are going together upon the same business; he sees that I am indisposed, and yet he will not wait for me but for three hours: pray, give him the worst horse in your stable; and let me have a chariot, or postchaise."

He slipped two ducats into the postmaster's hand, who punctually obeyed his orders. The king had a lame and restive horse, upon which he set out alone at ten at night, amidst darkness, snow, wind, and rain. His fellow-traveller, after having slept a

few hours, began to follow him in a chariot, with good horses. He had not ridden many miles, when, at daybreak, he overtook the king, who not being able to make his beast move on, was travelling on foot to the next stage.

Charles was obliged to get into During's chaise, where he slept upon the straw. Thus they continued the journey without intermission, by day on horseback, and sleeping by night in a chaise.

Having travelled for sixteen days, during which they had more than once been in danger of being taken, they arrived at last, on the 21st of November, 1714, at the gates of Stralsund, about one in the morning.

The king called out to the sentinel, and told him that he was a courier despatched from Turkey by the King of Sweden, and that he must immediately speak with General Duker, the governor. The sentinel said that it was too late; that the governor was gone to bed; and that he must wait till break of day.

The king replied that he came upon business of importance, and that, if they did not instantly go and awaken the governor, they should all be punished next morning. At last a sergeant went and called up the governor. Duker imagined that it might possibly be one of the king's generals: the gates were opened; and the courier introduced into the governor's chamber.

Duker, who was still half asleep, asked him: "What news of the King of Sweden?" The king, taking him by the arm, "What," says he to Duker, "have my most faithful subjects forgotten me?"

The governor recollected the king, though he could not believe his own eyes; and jumping out of bed, embraced his master's knees, with tears of joy. The news of this happy event was spread through the town in a moment. Everybody got up. The soldiers flocked about the governor's house. The streets were crowded with people, asking each other, whether the king had really come. All the windows were illuminated, and the conduits ran with wine, amidst the blaze of a thousand flambeaux, and repeated discharges of the artillery.

Meanwhile the king was put to bed, which was more than he had been for sixteen days before. His legs were so much swollen with the great fatigue he had undergone, that, instead of pulling, they were obliged to cut off his boots. As he had neither linen nor clothes, they immediately furnished him with such a wardrobe as the town could afford. After he had slept a few hours, he rose and went directly to review his troops, and visit his fortifications. And that very day, he despatched orders into all parts, for renewing the war against his enemies with greater vigor than ever. All these particulars, which are so consistent with the extraordinary character of Charles XII. were first communicated to me by M. Fabricius, and afterwards confirmed by Count Croissy, ambassador to the King of Sweden.

Europe was now in a condition very different from that in which it was when Charles left it, in 1709.

The war which had so long raged in the South, that is, in Germany, England, Holland, France,

Spain, Portugal, and Italy, was now at an end. The general peace which succeeded was owing to some private intrigues in the court of England. The Earl of Oxford, an able minister, and Lord Bolingbroke, one of the greatest geniuses, and one of the most eloquent orators of the age, had gotten the better of the Duke of Marlborough, and prevailed upon the queen to make a peace with Louis XIV. France being no longer at war with England, soon obliged the other powers to come to an accommodation.

Philip V. the grandson of Louis XIV. began to reign in peace over the ruins of the Spanish monarchy. The Emperor of Germany, now become master of Naples and Flanders, was firmly established in his vast dominions: and Louis XIV. seemed to aim at nothing higher than to finish his long career of glory by a peaceable end.

Anne, queen of England, died on the 10th of August, 1714, hated by half the nation, for having given peace to so many kingdoms. Her brother, James Stuart, an unhappy prince, excluded from the throne almost at his birth, not being in England at that time to claim the succession, which new laws would have conferred upon him, if his party could have prevailed; George I., elector of Hanover, was unanimously acknowledged King of Great Britain. The throne devolved to that elector not by right of blood, though descended from a daughter of James, but by virtue of an act of parliament.

George, advanced in years when he was called to reign over a people whose language he did not

understand, and to whom he was an utter stranger, considered himself rather as Elector of Hanover than King of England. All his ambition was to aggrandize his German dominions. He commonly went once a year to visit his hereditary subjects, by whom he was adored. In other respects, he took more pleasure in living like a private man, than like a mighty sovereign. The pomp of royalty appeared to him an insupportable burden. He passed his time with a few old courtiers, with whom he lived in great familiarity. He was not the king that made the greatest figure in Europe; but he was one of the wisest princes of the age, and perhaps the only one that knew how to enjoy on a throne the pleasures of friendship and private life.

Such were the principal monarchs, and such the situation of the south of Europe.

The revolutions that happened in the North were of another nature. The kings in that part of the world were engaged in war, and leagued together against the King of Sweden.

Augustus had long been restored to the throne of Poland by the assistance of the czar, and with the joint consent of the Emperor of Germany, of Anne of England, and of the States-General, who, though guaranties of the treaty of Altranstädt, when Charles XII. was able to impose laws, thought themselves absolved from that obligation, when they had nothing more to fear from him.

But Augustus did not enjoy an undisturbed authority. No sooner was he restored to the throne, than the people's apprehensions of arbitrary power began to revive. The whole nation was in arms to

oblige him to conform to the *pacta conventa,* a sacred contract between the king and people, who seemed to have recalled their sovereign for no other purpose than to declare war against him. In the beginning of these troubles, the name of Stanislaus was not once mentioned: his party seemed to be annihilated; and the Poles retained no other remembrance of the King of Sweden than as of a torrent, which, in the violence of its course, had occasioned a temporary change in the face of nature.

Poltava and the absence of Charles XII. had occasioned the fall not only of Stanislaus, but also of the Duke of Holstein, Charles's nephew, who had lately been despoiled of his dominions by the King of Denmark. The King of Sweden had had a sincere regard for the father, and, consequently, could not fail to be deeply affected by the misfortunes of the son; for glory having been the end of all his actions, the fall of those princes whom he had either made or restored, gave him as much pain as the loss of so many provinces.

Every one was at liberty to enrich himself with the ruins of Charles's fortune. Frederick William, the new King of Prussia, who seemed to be as fond of war as his father had been of peace, was the first to come in for his share of the spoils. He seized Stettin and part of Pomerania, as an equivalent for four hundred thousand crowns which he had advanced to the czar and the King of Denmark. George, Elector of Hanover, now become King of England, had likewise sequestered into his hands the duchies of Bremen and Verden, which the King

of Denmark had assigned to him as security for sixty thousand pistoles.* In this manner were divided the spoils of Charles XII. and whoever possessed any of his dominions as pledges, became, from their selfish and interested views, as dangerous enemies as those who had taken them from him.

With regard to the czar, he was doubtless the most formidable of all his enemies. His former losses, his victories, his very faults, his unremitting perseverance in acquiring knowledge, and in communicating that knowledge to his subjects, and his incessant labors, had justly entitled him to the character of a great man. Riga was already taken; Livonia, Ingria, Carelia, half of Finland, and all the provinces that had been conquered by Charles's ancestors, were now subjected to the Russian yoke.

Peter Alexiowitz, who, twenty years before, had not a single vessel in the Baltic, now saw himself master of those seas, with a fleet of thirty ships of the line.

One of these ships had been built by his own hands. He was the best carpenter, the best admiral, and the best pilot in the North. There was not a difficult passage from the Gulf of Bothnia to the ocean, which he had not sounded. And, having thus joined the labors of a common sailor to the

* The English Parliament afterwards granted a sum of money to complete the purchase; and thus Bremen and Verden were secured to the House of Hanover. This acquisition may be considered as the first link of that political chain by which Great Britain has been dragged back and fast bound to the continent.

curious experiments of a philosopher, and the grand designs of an emperor, he arrived, by degrees and a course of victories, to the rank of admiral, in the same manner as he had become a general in the land-service.

While Prince Gallitsin, a general formed under his auspices, and one of those who seconded his enterprises with the greatest vigor, completed the reduction of Finland, took the town of Vasa, and beat the Swedes, the emperor put to sea, in order to attempt the conquest of Aland, an island in the Baltic, about twelve leagues from Stockholm.

He set out on this expedition in the beginning of July, 1714, while his rival Charles XII. was keeping his bed at Demotica. He embarked at Cronstadt, a harbor which he had built a few years before, about four miles from St. Petersburg. The new harbor, the fleet, the officers, the sailors, were all the work of his own hands; and wherever he turned his eyes, he could behold nothing but what he himself had, in some measure, created.

On the 15th of July, the Russian fleet, consisting of thirty ships of the line, eighty galleys, and a hundred half-galleys, reached the coast of Aland. On board of these ships were twenty thousand soldiers: Admiral Apraxin was commander-in-chief; and the Russian Emperor served as rear-admiral. On the sixteenth the Swedish fleet, commanded by Vice-Admiral Erinschild, came up with the enemy; and, though weaker than they by two-thirds, maintained a fight for the space of three hours. The czar attacked the admiral's ship, and took her after a sharp engagement.

The same day he landed sixteen thousand men on the isle of Aland; and having taken a number of Swedish soldiers, that had not been able to get on board of Erinschild's fleet, he carried them off in his own ships. He returned to his harbor of Cronstadt with Erinschild's large ship, three others of a less size, one frigate, and six galleys, all which he had taken in the engagement.

From Cronstadt he set sail for St. Petersburg, followed by his own victorious fleet, and the ships he had taken from the enemy. On his arrival at St. Petersburg, he was saluted by a triple discharge of a hundred and fifty pieces of cannon. He then made a triumphant entry, which flattered his vanity still more than that at Moscow, as he received these honors in his favorite city, a place where but ten years before there was not a single hut, and where now there were thirty-four thousand five hundred houses; in a word, as he saw himself at the head not only of a victorious navy, but what is more, of the first Russian fleet that had ever appeared in the Baltic, and amidst the acclamations of a people, to whom, before his time, the very name of a fleet was not so much as known.

The entry into St. Petersburg was accompanied with much the same ceremonies as that into Moscow. The Swedish vice-admiral was the chief ornament of this new triumph. Peter Alexiowitz appeared in the procession as rear-admiral. A Russian nobleman, called Romanodowsky, who commonly represented the czar on these solemn occasions, was seated on a throne, surrounded with senators. To this nobleman the rear-admiral pre-

sented an account of his victory; and, in reward of his services, was declared vice-admiral. An odd ceremony, but extremely necessary, in a country where military subordination was one of the novelties which the czar wanted to introduce.

The Emperor of Russia, now victorious over the Swedes by sea and land, and having assisted in expelling them from Poland, began to domineer there in his turn. He acted as mediator between Augustus and the republic; a glory, perhaps, not inferior to that of creating a king. This honor, and, indeed, all the good fortune of Charles, had fallen to the share of the czar; who, it must be owned, made better use of his advantages, for all his successes were so managed as to contribute to the interest of his country. If he took a town, the best artisans in it carried their families and their industry to St. Petersburg. The manufactures, the arts and sciences of the provinces which he conquered from Sweden, were transported into Moscovy. Thus were his dominions enriched by his victories; a circumstance that makes him the most excusable of all conquerors.

Sweden, on the contrary, despoiled of almost all her foreign provinces, had neither commerce, money, nor credit. Her veteran troops, which were formerly so formidable, had either fallen in battle, or perished of hunger. Upwards of a hundred thousand Swedes were slaves in the vast dominions of the czar; and nearly the same number had been sold to the Turks and Tartars. The human species seemed visibly to decline in the country, but the

king's arrival at Stralsund inspired them with fresh hopes.

The respect and admiration which they had formerly entertained for his sacred person, were still so strongly rivetted in the minds of his subjects, that the youths came from the country in crowds and voluntarily offered to enlist, though there were not a sufficient number of hands left to cultivate the lands.

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